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Apple 4.0

As I write this, the fourth anniversary of Steve Jobs' death has just passed. When his illness was first revealed there was great concern in the business and technology world at how Apple might persist without its, arguably, most influential founder.

Clearly, the company has not just survived, but has flourished. New products, booming revenues and a burgeoning share price suggest Apple is well into a period of growth. That had me thinking: if Apple were software what version would we be on?

Clearly, the Jobs/Wozniak era of the 70s and early 80s was Version 1.0. But then Jobs was out of the company and the next version of Apple was born.

Apple 2.0 was not a great release. It became bloated, suffered from a lack of clear direction and was almost withdrawn from the market. It's been written that Apple was only months away from financial collapse.

But then, in 1997, Jobs returned to Apple. First as the interim CEO and eventually as the permanent CEO. And so Apple 3.0 was released.

Looking at the two reigns, aside from Jobs there was one other common

element – counterpoint to his exuberance and often abrasive style. In Apple 1.0, he had Steve Wozniak at his side, acting as a sounding board and someone who could take Jobs' vision and make it into a tangible product.

With Apple 3.0, that balance was maintained by Jony Ive, Apple's design guru who has been behind almost every piece of Apple hardware of the last decade and much of the software.

But now we're in the Tim Cook era – Apple 4.0. Cook is clearly not working in Jobs' shadow. And perhaps that is Jobs' greatest legacy. He anointed a successor who understands Apple's DNA. But he also established processes and systems within Apple to keep that alive.

The foundation Jobs laid before his death has not only ensured Apple could thrive with Captain Cook at the rudder, but that a foundation has been laid so that Apple 5.0, 6.0 and beyond could continue with new leaders when the time comes for Cook to step aside.



STAFF PICKS

It's time to get the Christmas lists ready. What tech toy do you most want for Christmas?



ANTHONY CARUANA

Electronic door locks so I can

check if I've locked up when I go out rather than worrying about whether I remembered to lock the door.



MADELEINE SWAIN

Some WeMo gadgets are

sounding good, so I can turn off all the lights and equipment the children left on without having to get out of bed...



JAMUNA RAJ

A GoPro camera. It'll be a timely gift

for my travels!



MONIQUE BLAIR

The new Apple TV so I can test out

apps on TV with tvOS!

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Add professional monitoring and recording to any SDI and HDMI camera with Blackmagic Video Assist!

Blackmagic Video Assist is the ultimate on set production monitor and recorder for any SDI or HDMI camera! The large bright 5 inch monitor lets you see your framing and ensure you get absolutely perfect focus! The built in recorder uses common SD cards and records extremely high quality 10-bit 4:2:2 ProRes or DNxHD files that are much better quality than most cameras can record and are compatible with all video software. Now it's easy to add professional monitoring and recording to any camera!

On Set HD Monitor

Blackmagic Video Assist has an extremely bright and sharp full HD 1920 x 1080 resolution display that's much bigger than the tiny built in display found on most cameras. Mount it directly to your camera or use a longer cable so it can be hand held by the cinematographer for composing shots. You can even monitor Ultra HD sources!

Professional HD Recorder

Now you can bypass the lossy compression used on most DSLR and video cameras! Blackmagic Video Assist records broadcast quality 10-bit 4:2:2 ProRes or DNxHD files onto high speed SD cards. Recording can be automatically triggered by camera start/stop and the files are compatible with all leading editing and color correction software!

Fast Touchscreen Controls

The built in monitor features a touchscreen to make setting up and using Blackmagic Video Assist incredibly easy! Use simple tap and swipe gestures to make adjustments, display camera information and evaluate audio levels and exposure. The elegant heads up display is semi transparent so you can still see your video at all times!

Broadcast Quality Connections

Blackmagic Video Assist includes HDMI and 6G-SDI inputs so you can record from virtually any camera or DSLR. The HDMI and SDI video outputs means you get the ultimate hand held media player for viewing shots on set or presenting to clients. You also get a headphone jack, 12V power and two LP-E6 battery slots for non stop power!

Blackmagic Video Assist

Includes DaVinci Resolve 12

A\$765

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Camera not included.





HAVE YOUR SAY

LETTER OF THE MONTH

GOODBYE TO MY FAVOURITE BIG CAT

Well it's finally happened. After six happy years of OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard, I've finally been forced to update. I don't consider myself someone who's particularly resistant to change; in fact, I'm usually one of the early adopters of new technology. But I'm self-employed, and my income is directly proportionate to my productivity on the computer, so I tend to shy away from anything that may compromise that. When I hear things like 'major upgrade' and 'some compatibility issues' or, worse still, 'a great new way of doing things', I am more than a little hesitant to partake.

My main computer is an early 2008 Mac Pro with 3GHz dual quad core processors, 32Gb of RAM and a solid-state hard drive. The computer may be seven years old, but it still flies. The hardware speed was never a reason for not upgrading the OS. It really came down to having everything working just the way I like it. Nothing about the new OS updates appealed to me enough to warrant the potential disruption.

I do like to stay up-to-date, but I need a good reason for doing so. Sometimes an update comes along and it provides new functionality or a new productivity tool that makes it all worthwhile. Other times it's just pretty colours and no substance. For example, I've been using Adobe Photoshop since version 1.0. With each update we've seen the software mature and improve into the juggernaut it's become today. But somewhere around version CS4 (v11) I stopped being dazzled with the new tools. In truth, I actually started getting annoyed with some of them. Even though I've continued paying for updates, I still go straight to Photoshop CS4 when I'm working.

So why did I update from Snow Leopard if I loved it so much? I was nagged into doing so, that's why. I like to use Safari for my web browsing. I know it's the underdog, but I like it because it's fast. But lately I've been getting lots of oh-so-unsubtle messages from websites telling me that my version of Safari is no longer supported. But unfortunately, I had gone as far as the update path for Safari would allow under 10.6. If I wanted a new Safari, I would need a new OS X first.

And then there was the iPhone. My iPhone 6 started telling me there was a shiny new iOS 9 ready to download. I sensibly waited until 9.0.1 was released (let someone else be the guinea pig) and then I took the

plunge. Unlike my desktop computer, my iPhone is more of a toy than a productivity tool. I don't mind updating to the latest version of iOS whenever it becomes available. But the next time I plugged my iPhone into the computer after the update, I was rudely informed that I would need to update iTunes in order to sync the phone. Hang on, I thought I was already using the latest version of iTunes! Ah no, it turns out I'm not. I'm using the latest version that will run on 10.6. Oh the humanity!

Slowly but surely the nagging took its toll. I realised that I was just postponing the inevitable. Over the past six years, I'd managed to avoid Lion, Mountain Lion and Mavericks, but I was going to have to get in line at last. I made the mistake of forgetting that Apple is a hardware company. Even though it produces some lovely software to go with it, that's not how it ended up being worth over US\$700 billion. With every software update, your computer becomes a little more obsolete, until eventually it's running like a Commodore 64, and you're forced into a hardware update. Cha-ching!

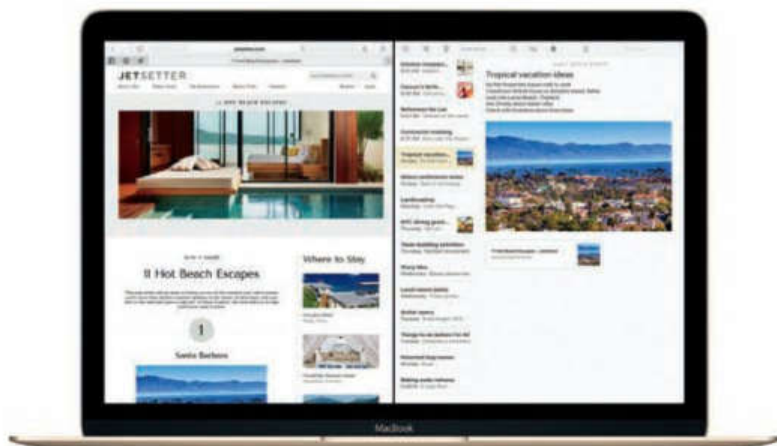
So last week I bit the bullet and installed OS X Yosemite. I did a clean install (which I like to do every few years, and jumping from 10.6 all the way to 10.10 it seemed like a prudent move). It took me about two days to get everything up and running the way I wanted, but it was a relatively painless process. Almost all of my favourite applications still worked, and the ones that didn't were easily (and cheaply) updated. Ironically, the one exception was Apple's own photo management software, Aperture. Having bought it in a physical box, rather than via the App Store, I am yet to figure out a way of upgrading to 3.6 and making it useable again. And given the lukewarm reviews of Apple's replacement software, Photos, I'm a little hesitant to migrate my 1.4-terabyte photo library to the new application.

So what do I think of the new operating system? Well, it runs a little slower on my Mac, but at least I can take advantage of all of that new iCloud stuff. And I can use the new Safari and iTunes. On the whole, it gets a thumbs-up.

I know what you're thinking, 'But what about El Capitan?'

Here we go again...

Bruce Rayne



IT'S NOT JUST OS X THAT GETS UPGRADED

I have just started reading the virtues of El Capitan in *Macworld* September and it does seem to have a lot of very desirable elements and fixes. Apple usually does upgrades well (better than others?).

As a continual Mac user since the mid '80s (yes, I am one of the poor buggers who purchased a Newton), I have noticed, and I may not be alone here, that a good upgrade that works is not the whole story. System upgrades usually means some apps no longer working. This may be a minor concern or major, depending on the app and what your workflow requires. I held back upgrading to Yosemite with concerns over Final Cut Pro 7. I have made the switch now to Final Cut Pro

X (FCPX), but wanted this switch to be when I was ready, not when Apple upgraded the OS.

I understand the difficulties with supporting older apps and have no problems with this. I just would like to have some place where I could go that listed apps with problems in a new OS upgrade. Then I could pace my upgrade strategy to include app and skill upgrade as well. Is this a new column for *Macworld*? Perhaps a web page where problems (and workarounds could be listed).

The OS X upgrade is free, but many of the software upgrades are not. The need to upgrade skill levels for new software is also an issue. It is way more complex than just downloading the OS X.

Rod Winning

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■ Comments on stories or Forum posts on www.macworld.com.au are also eligible for the prize.

■ We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will.

■ Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference.



This month's prize to the *Macworld Australia* reader who has submitted what we think is the most interesting letter is a WeMo Switch – a home automation device that lets you switch off electronics from your Android and iOS smart device via the free WeMo app. The WeMo switch retails for \$69.95

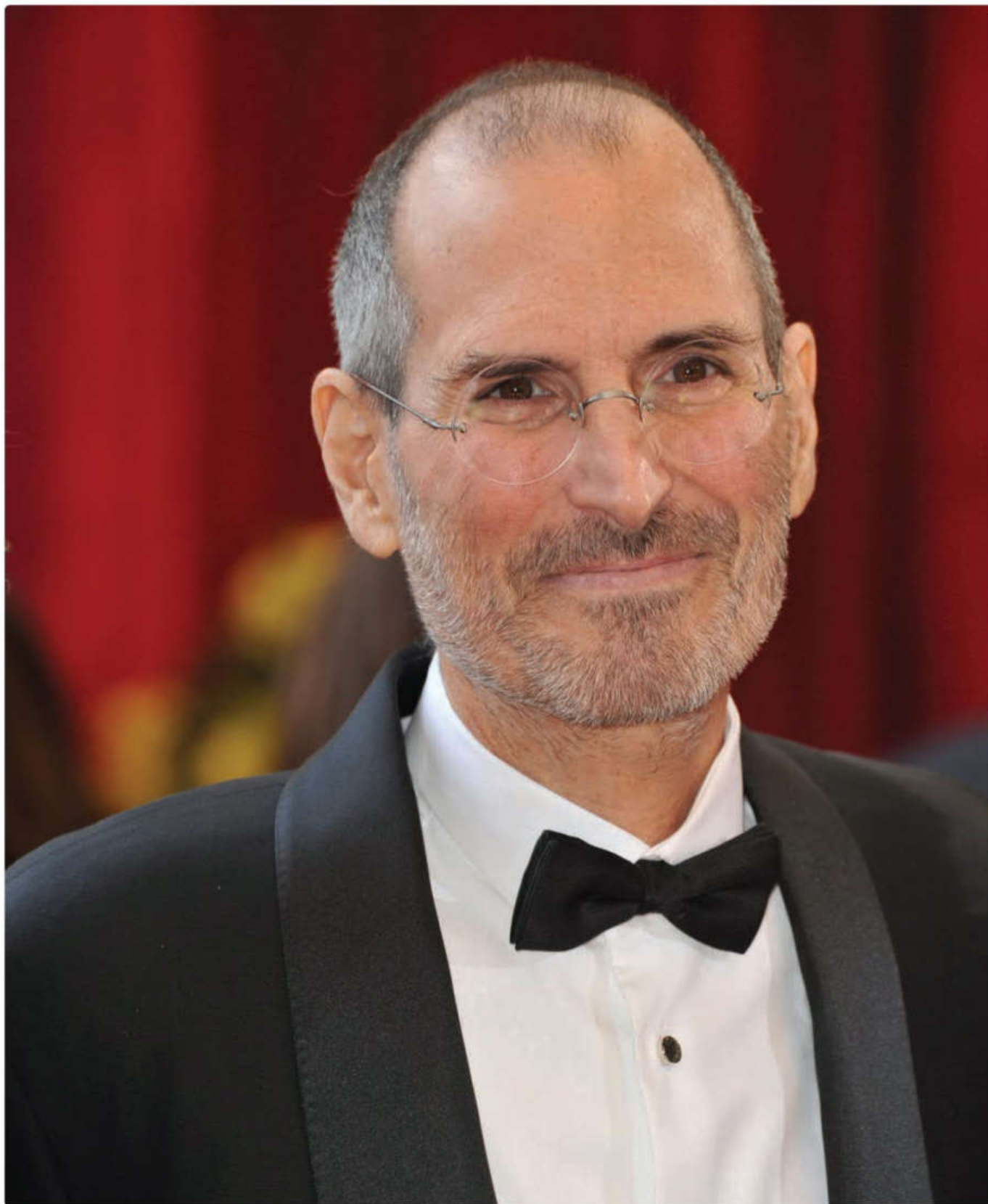
The WeMo Switch lets you turn electronic devices on or off from anywhere. It uses your existing home Wi-Fi network to provide wireless control of TVs, lamps, stereos, heaters, fans and more.

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HOT STUFF

A selection of Apple, Mac and iOS news from Macworld.com.au



APPLE'S LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE TO STEVE JOBS

Monday 5 October marked the fourth year anniversary of Steve Jobs' death. He would've been 60 this year.

To commemorate Jobs' life and legacy, several Apple executives, including Apple CEO Tim Cook, penned personal remembrances that were posted on AppleWeb, Cupertino's internal news website.

"He was unselfish in the face of his own mortality," wrote Cook, recalling his last days with the iconic Apple co-founder. Cook shared how he had offered Jobs a portion of his own liver for a donor liver transplant, but Jobs refused.

"Even when his outlook was bleak and he had every right to accept help, he refused, rather than put a friend's health at risk," Cook continued. "He put his compassion for me above his own needs, and I will never forget it."

Below is Tim Cook's essay in full, as first posted on *BuzzFeed*:

"In February of 2009, Steve was on a leave of absence from Apple and spending his time at his home. I would drop by after work and discuss many things with him. He was waiting for a liver transplant and his health seemed to be rapidly deteriorating. One day in particular, he seemed especially ill and I left feeling so distraught that I threw up in his yard.

I was worried he would not live long enough to reach the top of the waiting list for a cadaver liver. After checking out my own health and researching donor liver transplants, I visited Steve again and told him I wanted to give him a portion of my liver. Despite his condition and the uncertainty of whether he would live long enough to be at the top of the waiting list, he adamantly refused to accept my offer for fear it would place my own health in jeopardy.

That was the kind of person he was. He was unselfish in the face of his own mortality. Even when his outlook was bleak and he had every right to accept help, he refused, rather than put a friend's health at risk. He put his compassion for me above his own needs, and I will never forget it."

Other Apple executives also wrote personal remembrances on AppleWeb, which were subsequently transcribed by *Mashable*. Apple's vice president of internet software and services Eddy Cue described Jobs as sometimes a brother, sometimes a father figure.

Vice president of software technology Bud Tribble remembered Jobs' artful vision when he took the original Mac team to a Louis Comfort Tiffany exhibit in San Francisco. Member of Apple's board of directors Andrea Jung called him thoughtful and caring – "a true friend". Senior vice president of marketing Phil Schiller recalled how Jobs' happiness and pride would fuel the entire team backstage during the product events.

Cook also sent a company-wide email to all employees on Monday, urging them to remember who Jobs was and what he stood for. The email read:

"Team,

Today marks four years since Steve passed away. On that day, the world lost a visionary. We at Apple lost a leader, a mentor and many of us lost a dear friend.

Steve was a brilliant person, and his priorities were very simple. He loved his family above all, he loved Apple, and he loved the people with whom he worked so closely and achieved so much.

Each year since his passing, I have reminded everyone in the Apple community that we share the privilege and responsibility of continuing the work Steve loved so much.

What is his legacy? I see it all around us: an incredible team that embodies his spirit of innovation and creativity. The greatest products on earth, beloved by customers

and empowering hundreds of millions of people around the world. Soaring achievements in technology and architecture. Experiences of surprise and delight. A company that only he could have built. A company with an intense determination to change the world for the better.

And, of course, the joy he brought his loved ones.

He told me several times in his final years that he hoped to live long enough to see some of the milestones in his children's lives. I was in his office over the summer with Laurene and their youngest daughter. Messages and drawings from his kids to their father are still there on Steve's whiteboard.

If you never knew Steve, you probably work with someone who did or who was here when he led Apple. Please stop one of us today and ask what he was really like. Several of us have posted our personal remembrances on AppleWeb, and I encourage you to read them.

Thank you for honoring Steve by continuing the work he started, and for remembering both who he was and what he stood for."

The story behind the story: in the wake of several unflattering portrayals of Steve Jobs on the big screen, Apple's top brass is hoping the Apple co-founder is remembered fondly.

Danny Boyle and Aaron Sorkin's long-awaited Steve Jobs movie hits cinemas this Friday 9 October in a limited release (with a full release across the US on 23 October), and early reviews suggest that depictions of Jobs' personal flaws were not left on the cutting room floor.

Movie critic for the *New York Post* Lou Lumenick wrote: "I came away with the feeling that the filmmakers were practically implying that [Jobs'] early death at 56 was some kind of karmic payback." Ouch.

Even those who haven't seen the film and knew Jobs personally expected this harsh treatment from Hollywood. Jobs'

HOT STUFF

A selection of Apple, Mac and iOS news from Macworld.com.au

widow Laurene Powell Jobs apparently lobbied to have the film killed, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. When late night TV host Stephen Colbert asked Tim Cook about the movie, Cook called it "opportunistic", a criticism that screenwriter Sorkin strongly contested.

"If you've got a factory full of children in China assembling phones for 17 cents an hour, you've got a lot of nerve calling someone else opportunistic," Sorkin told *The Hollywood Reporter*. The screenwriter has since apologised for his jarring response.

JACK DORSEY NAMED TWITTER CEO, BAIN APPOINTED COO

Twitter has made co-founder Jack Dorsey its new CEO, ending months of speculation and handing him the tough task of turning around the company's sluggish user growth.

Dorsey is also CEO of mobile payments company Square, creating the unusual situation of having one person lead two high-profile Silicon Valley companies at the same time. He's also on the board of The Walt Disney Company.

Dorsey has been Twitter's interim CEO since Dick Costolo stepped down abruptly in June, so the big change, approved by the board on 30 September according to an SEC filing, is to make Dorsey's role permanent. That filing also said, "There are currently no plans to provide Mr Dorsey with direct compensation for his role as chief executive officer."

On a recent conference call, the Twitter executive team sought to convince media and analysts that Dorsey can lead Twitter and fuel new product development while simultaneously running another company.

Dorsey "surpassed goals as interim CEO while also running Square," said Peter Currie, lead independent director of Twitter. "Jack not only understands Twitter's culture but is a part of it."

Currie portrayed the CEO search effort as an arduous one that considered a variety of candidates, but ultimately led back to the company's co-founder. He said the company board met 10 times, the executive search committee had 15 separate meetings, and there were more than two dozen meetings between candidates and search committee members in an effort to find a new CEO.

"The board ultimately concluded that Jack is that leader," Currie said. "Between Twitter and Square, Jack has built two great companies from the ground up," he added.

The board also appointed Adam Bain, who has been president, Global Revenue and Partnerships since September 2010, as COO (chief operating officer). Also on 30 September, Costolo resigned his position on Twitter's board. While Dorsey had been Twitter's chairman, the SEC filing made public on in early October said that he would no longer serve in that role although he will remain on the board.

Currie said the board would be reaching out to candidates to fill the chairman position.

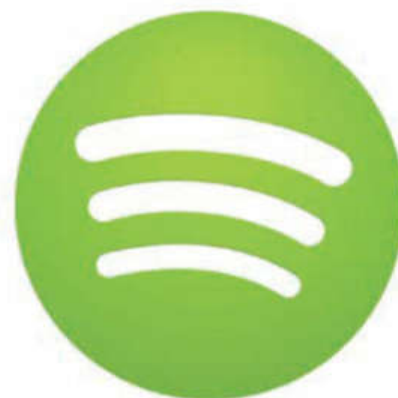
The social network is under intense pressure to figure out how to draw new users to its service. Unlike Facebook, which ramped easily to a billion subscribers, Twitter grew quickly at the start, but seems to have hit a plateau.

It reported strong growth in its advertising business last quarter, but the social network isn't profitable, in part because it's investing in the infrastructure that delivers its service.

More worryingly, the number of core users who access Twitter at least once a month increased by only two million last quarter, to 304 million.

"This is unacceptable and we're not happy about it," Dorsey said at the time.





Dorsey created Twitter in 2005 and 2006 with Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass. Dorsey became CEO soon after, but lost the role in 2008, because he became a “distracted manager”, according to a profile in *The New Yorker*.

The following year he co-founded Square, known for its technology that lets small merchants take credit card payments on smartphones and tablets. He’s chairman and CEO of that company, in addition to now being CEO of Twitter.

SPOTIFY EXPECTS TO HAVE CLOSE TO 100 MILLION USERS BY YEAR’S END

You may think Spotify would be feeling the heat from Apple’s entry into the crowded music-streaming market, but recent comments from a high-ranking Spotify executive suggest the Swedish company remains largely unaffected.

In the early part of June, weeks ahead of Apple Music’s launch, Spotify announced that its subscriber base had soared to more than 20 million (twice as many as a year ago), while the overall

number of users stood at a record 75 million (versus 35 million a year ago). Impressive as the growth of the previous 12 months or so had been, one couldn’t help but wonder if it would be able to withstand the mad surge in competition. The message coming out of Spotify seems to be, “Ya sure, you betcha.”

Spotify chief revenue officer Jeff Levick told an advertising conference in New York in October that the company is on course to reach the 100 million-user mark by Christmas, according to the *International Business Times*. He didn’t say how many of these new users are expected to pay for the service, but if historical usage claims are anything to go by we’re probably looking at an additional six to seven million subscribers.

Spotify isn’t the only one experiencing unprecedented growth. It turns out it’s an industry-wide phenomenon from which streaming music services everywhere are benefitting. Take Rhapsody/Napster, a premium-only service, which has seen its popularity explode in the last year or so, going from two million to three

million subscribers at a rate unmatched in its 13-year history. Even artist-owned Tidal, despite its flaws, has managed to almost double its subscriber base in the last six months to more than one million. Meanwhile, Apple Music’s just ended three-month free trial was able to suck in more than 15 million users (though it’s unclear how many of those have stuck around).

It would be foolish to assume that all is well with Spotify. Its rapidly surging popularity notwithstanding, the company remains deeply in the red; its revenue is growing, but so are its losses. Many believe the bulk of the company’s financial issues stem from its freemium model, which has long been a source of tension between the firm and the recording artists on which it depends, and is gradually becoming a major cause of concern for music labels and investors. With its licensing agreements with the big three labels – Universal, Sony and Warner – set to come up for renewal soon, the music streamer could face renewed pressure to severely limit or altogether abandon its free, ad-supported tier. 📺

Busy Bee

A busy bee brings spring into focus



Larry Hermann is a regular contributor to iSnap and his submission this month, titled *Busy Bee*, captivated us, as spring is well and truly upon us.

Hermann says, "I've enjoyed photography as a hobby for years, but since the iPhones have come about I've found I've always got a camera on me, so opportunities just seem to be more so for random pics. The bees I was watching as I was just walking down the street and the lovely violet colour of those flowers caught my eye. I like nature and have taken many pics of flowers and trees over the years."

The photo was shot on an iPhone 6 and wasn't edited at all – it's straight from the camera.

"This pic is exactly as it remains on the camera roll on the iPhone," says Hermann.

"I used the app called Camera + as it has a very good macro feature to take these kinds of close-ups. It also simulates a low f-stop just like using a DSLR, which gives that nice depth of field look with the non-focused background in a blur."

This highlights one of the great features of the iPhone. Although Apple's camera app does a competent job, by allowing developers to access the hardware, it has created opportunities for developers to add to Apple's already powerful functions. Hermann has experimented with many camera apps.

"Other photo apps I've sometimes experimented with have been Photosynth, Time Exposure, SnapBack, Pixlr-o-matic and PhotoFusion," he says.

Hermann isn't a professional

photographer. He's a psychiatrist who doesn't like to prescribe medications much, if at all, preferring to help patients through careful listening and problem solving.

"I am a *Macworld* magazine subscriber and I admit I'm an incurable Apple obsessive-compulsive. My longstanding interest in photography has fused with admiration for Apple's attention to detail in its iPhones, as well as Mac computers, of which I use a few, both to run my practice and for everything else including photography. I've just upgraded to the iPhone 6s Plus and am looking forward to taking even better photos with the dramatically improved camera."

And we're looking forward to seeing many more happy snaps from Hermann and our other iSnap contributors.

In iSnap we're on the lookout for some of the best photographs being taken with iOS devices. Submit your favourite original shots to macworld@macworld.com.au for your chance to be featured in the online iSnap gallery www.macworld.com.au/isnap. Each month's winner will win a prize and appear on this page!

This month's prize is a Selfie Tripod and Extension Pack by PADACS.

PADACS specialises in the design and development of accessories for the iPad and iPhone. Many of us love taking selfies, but it can be awkward trying to pose, hold the phone and press the button all at the same time. The new Keep Calm and Selfie On Remote by PADACS iPhone mobile accessories, makes easy work of taking the perfect selfie or group photo. It uses Bluetooth technology to pair with your iPhone, allowing you to remotely trigger the camera and capture your selfie with ease. To see the full range of products visit www.padacs.com





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FLYING HIGH: TRAVELS WITH YOUR MAC

BY DAVID FLYNN



Passport. MacBook. iPhone. iPad. If you're anything like me, this is how your packing list begins. It could be yet another business trip, a well-earned overseas holiday or even a long weekend away. But it's a safe bet that for *Macworld Australia* readers, a clutch of Apple tech is always your travelling companion.

In this month's feature, we've pulled together a stack of real-world tips for travelling with your Mac and assorted iDevices that'll get you ready to roam.

Now all you need to do is book your ticket...

PREP YOUR TECH TRAVEL KIT

One of those fancy business class or first class amenity kit bags, emptied of its moisturisers and what-nots, makes a perfectly-sized pouch for odds and ends such as USB cables, adapter plugs, SD cards and a thumb-drive.

Bulkier items such as an Airport Express can go into your checked luggage, but the stuff you'll most likely want to use at the airport or during the flight should stay in this kit, which in turn slips into your carry-on bag.

INTERNATIONAL AC TRAVEL ADAPTER

A multi-country adapter is a must-have for the frequent flyer, but lean towards models that also include USB ports so you can also charge your iDevices from the same wall socket.

Some models have a clip-on USB cap, which covers the AC socket, but I suggest you get an adapter with inbuilt USB sockets so you can connect AC and USB gear at the same time.

BE PREPARED

Always pop a universal AC adapter into your carry-on bag instead of your checked luggage. If you're doing a flight with a stop-over, the adapter may be needed to plug your MacBook into that transit airport's AC sockets.

At Hong Kong International Airport, for example, local regulations insist that only the local HK-style AC socket (which

is identical to the British one) can be installed in terminals and lounges.

Stuck at an airport business class or first class lounge without the necessary adapter? Ask nicely at the reception desk, where they'll often have a handful of adapter plugs to loan out to passengers.

Another reason to keep that AC adapter in your hand luggage is that some at-seat power sockets favour the AC plug configuration from the airline's home country rather than use a multi-plug international socket.

There is a caveat here: some of the larger adapters, when coupled to the MacBook's little power brickette, will lean out of the AC socket far enough to lose an electrical connection to the actual AC supply. The quick and not always reliable fix is to wedge the adapter into place, using your carry-on bag for example.

If you've been using MacBooks for many years, however, you may have a collection of the removable AC plug-heads for countries other than Australia.

US plug-heads were often included in the box with Aussie MacBooks, and you'll find plenty of these plus the European and UK versions on eBay.

If you're regularly flying to and travelling within those countries, grab the relevant plug-head and add this to your travel kit.



BYO POWERBOARD

Travelling with several bits of gear that'll need recharging? Instead of buying a handful of travel adapters, buy one adapter and bring along a compact powerboard with four Aussie AC sockets.

Plug the powerboard into the universal adapter and then plug your own gear straight into the powerboard.

Don't just grab the cheapest board you can find at Bunnings, however. If some of your gear uses rather large power bricks, choose a board with well-spaced power points – otherwise one chunky adapter will claim two spots on the board.

A costlier but more compact solution is the AlloCoco PowerCube (pictured above), which gives you four AC sockets and two USB sockets for around \$30.

PROTECTING YOUR MACBOOK

Your MacBook is your travelling companion through thick and thin, so give it a little TLC.

This could be a simple sleeve or a snug-fitting case that wraps around it.

I use an Impact Snap Case from Tech21. This consists of two skinny halves made from a somewhat flexible shock-absorbing material, with what feels like a semi-firm gel sandwiched between the layers.

It protects my MacBook Air from scratches, knocks and even drops, while

my choice of the purple case (it's actually more of a subdued violet than flashy 'pimp purple') adds a touch of personalisation when airport lounges and press conferences are flooded with look-alike aluminium MacBooks.

AT THE AIRPORT

Different countries and indeed airports have different requirements about which tech must come out of your carry-on bag and which can stay in.

As a rule it's 'laptops out, tablets in', but there are enough exceptions to this maxim that I haul out both my MacBook Air and iPad Air to avoid having my bag make a time-consuming second trip through the scanner.

If you've got access to an airport lounge, settle in and enjoy!

But if you're planning to use your MacBook in the lounge, make a point of plugging in to an AC socket – even if you'll soon be flying in business class with your very own AC plug at hand.

More than once I've been caught out by losing a few hours' charge on my MacBook Air, doing pre-flight work on battery alone, only to find that the AC socket next to my business class seat wasn't working.

This robbed me of a few hours' inflight use of the MacBook Air, be it for working or watching my BYO videos (I love a good inflight binge viewing session. Eight hours of uninterrupted *Downton Abbey*? Bring it on, Carson!).

CAN'T GET INTO AN AIRPORT LOUNGE?

Modern airports increasingly make provision for the connected generation with dedicated and clearly signposted recharge stations in terminals and near boarding gates.

If that's not the case, there are still a few places where you can plug in to top up your laptop or tablet:

Check the support columns throughout the passenger waiting areas (more often than not you'll already see some laptop users clustered around these anyway). The AC outlets won't be on every column but there are usually enough to go around.



Sometimes the AC outlets are hidden out of sight under a bank of payphones (especially in US airports).

If it's outside peak hours, watch for the cleaning crews: those vacuum cleaners and floor polishing machines have to be plugged in somewhere!

Most airport cafés will have a few power points, typically on the wall or sometimes on a support column. So grab a coffee, plug in your laptop and relax. You may, however, need to manoeuvre your table into the best position and be sure no one can trip over your AC cord.

I've even heard of travellers perching themselves at the end of an airport bar and, with the blessing of a friendly bartender (and provisional of course on ordering a 'real' drink or two, not dawdling over a glass of tap water) plugging into an AC socket on the other side of the bar.

If you're going to be travelling through a lot of domestic airports without lounge access, consider packing a slim-line double adapter that's compatible with the local AC socket design.

Even if all the available power points are already being used by fellow travellers, they'll be fine to let you share 'their' power point using your double adapter.

UP IN THE AIR

All seats at the pointy end of the plane have AC sockets, usually in a universal design so they can accommodate any type of AC plug. Premium economy seats may also have one AC socket for each passenger or a socket shared between every two seats.

For economy travel it's a mixed bag: newer aircraft and modern seat designs will often see shared AC sockets, but the bulk of airlines make no such concessions.

USB ports, on the other hand, are becoming an increasingly popular fitting on every seat from tip to tail.

These won't always have sufficient current to charge an iPad, but at least it should keep the battery at the same level rather than seeing it run down.

BEING PRODUCTIVE INFLIGHT

At this point you're happily settled into your seat (hopefully, business class), with your MacBook and iDevices plugged into their respective power outlets.

If there's work to be done during your flight, here are some strategies to make the most of your time.

If your status or the flight's passenger load allows it, request an empty seat

next to yours so you can spread out your work using that spare seat as well as its tray table.

You'll also be able to wedge your laptop bag under that seat during flight, to keep everything within reach without compromising your own precious legroom.

Set realistic expectations of how much work you'll do on the flight. Rarely will a 10-hour trip mean 10 solid hours of work. It may not even be five hours.

It's all too easy in that rushed day before you travel to tell yourself that you'll catch up during the flight, you'll bash out that report or presentation uninterrupted.

But you never feel as chirpy in flight as on the ground.

There's less oxygen circulating in the cabin, along with higher cabin pressure and lower humidity levels, all of which contribute to you feeling a bit tired and not nearly as productive. And that's before that glass or two of wine.

That said, some people get into 'the zone' and can work all the way through a long flight.

But this can be the fast track to jetlag, especially on flights to the US that touch down early in the morning.

If your body clock is still set to Australian time when you land in the US early in the day, you're in for one of the most unproductive days you can imagine – and one which could easily negate the benefits of working all the way through your flight.

So pace yourself, and plan what duration of the flight you'll work through, and when you'll grab some shut-eye.

Of course, don't short-change yourself on sleep. You're guaranteed to have a less restful sleep on the plane than you would at home, and you'll probably end up waking hours before landing, as breakfast is being served.

In fact, meals add another complication to the puzzle.

Most flights departing Australia tend to serve a meal within two hours of take-off, which can be just when you're firing on all cylinders with that report or presentation.

After dinner and a glass of wine you're

well into the flight and tiredness is starting to settle in. I tend to attack the largest and most urgent slabs of work as my priority.

I use some time in the airport lounge to start getting them into shape, and keep working on them for the 20 minutes between boarding and when we're ready for take-off.

By the time my meal arrives I'm usually ready for a break.

If not, I opt for the 'express meal' to save time, or ask that my meal be held back and served when I'm ready (naturally, these aren't options in economy class).

Post-dinner is when I can hammer away at small tasks such as emails, invoices and shorter documents, and basically nibble at the workload for another two hours.

But I know that at pretty much any time I can switch off, yet have still knocked over the bulk of my work.

And that's close to the first half of a long flight spoken for. Settle back with a movie and maybe a glass of wine, or just listen to some music on your iPad and relax.

SKY-HIGH SURFING

An increasing number of airlines offer internet access on flights to and from Australia, as well as around the globe, although Qantas has yet to add its name to this list. Emirates, Singapore Airlines, Etihad, United Airlines and even low-cost carrier Scoot all serve up sky-high surfing on flights into and out of Australia.

On recent flights with each of those of those airlines I've become increasingly used to the convenience of logging on at 40,000 feet. At the same time, it can be a frustrating experience. There's only a limited amount of bandwidth to be shared among hundreds of passengers and, in most cases, the signal is not exactly blazingly fast to begin with.

Here are some strategies I adopt to make the most of my connection:

Lower your expectations: we've generally become used to moderately high-speed connections at work and home, but the satellite speeds available on flights will time-warp you back a decade with a top rate of around 3Mbps. It's still sufficient for email, social media and browsing the

web, but you'll find most modern, image-laden websites are slow to load. You'll also want to keep focused on the task at hand rather than allowing yourself to be distracted viewing non-essential sites that can chew up a limited data allowance.

Limit your browsing windows: change your browsing habits from opening a dozen sites simultaneously, each in its own tabbed window. It's a key plank for efficient working when on a fast connection, but each open tab demands a certain amount of data to keep it refreshed. With a slower inflight connection, you're better off focusing all the bandwidth on a single site to begin with.

Let's say you're dialling up a news site to read the latest stories: once that site's open and you've clicked a story to read, then you can open a second tab to load another site or page in the background.

Beware of attachments: poorly-configured desktop clients will download bulky attachments and even large signature logos that slow your connection to a barely usable crawl and easily chew through your inflight data allowance.

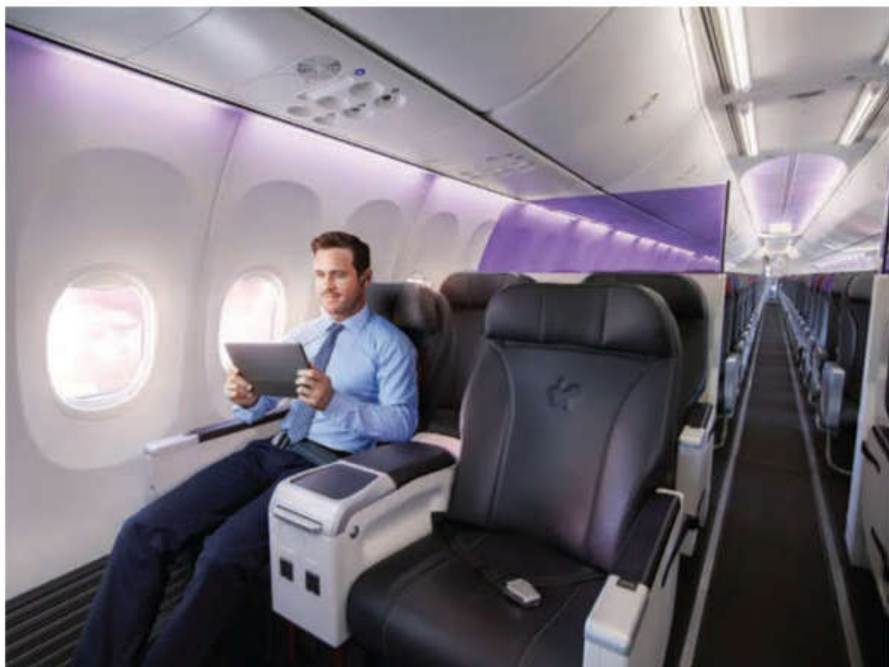
Temporarily disable the automatic downloading of attachments in your MacBook's email software: use the Mail app on your iPhone or iPad, or use any web-based interface to your email account so that you can choose to read the body of a message without also having unsolicited attachments shoved down the pipeline.

Disable Cloud backups: this one caught me out the very first time I connected to inflight internet. My online backup software, CrashPlan, diligently copies all important files to a secure 'Cloud' storage system: great over a fast connection at work, not so much when you're using inflight Wi-Fi. Within a matter of minutes those backups had gobbled all the data I'd bought to use during the flight. I quickly wised up and temporarily switched off the Cloud backup app before a second swipe of my credit card got me online again.

IDEVICES ON THE ROAD

I find my iPhone's battery cops a real hammering when I'm out and about overseas.





Using Google Maps or Apple Maps to find my way around, snapping photos and sometimes videos, social media posts, web browsing and bursts of email all take their toll.

Well before the day is done, and often just when I need it the most, my iPhone's battery gauge moves into the red zone.

An iPhone battery case or stand-alone external battery is the obvious solution.

Because the demands of my job can also see my iPhone used as a voice recorder, Wi-Fi hotspot and for filing stories and Facebook photo galleries, I've opted for a belt-and-braces approach, with a Mophie Juice Pack case for my iPhone 6 as well as lipstick-sized Anker PowerCore+ Mini battery recharger for an end-of-day top-up to get my iPhone through a night out.

It doesn't hurt to pop your iPhone charger and universal AC adapter into your backpack, either. If you drop into a café for a break or lunch and spy an AC plug nearby, take the opportunity to top up your iPhone or iPad.

KEEPING CONNECTED

Through a combination of travel packs and reduced casual roaming rates, Aussie telcos have made significant strides in reducing

the cost of global roaming compared to a handful of years back.

I rate Vodafone's 'Red Roaming' as the pick of the bunch, with a flat \$5 per day to use your Australian plan's data, text and call allowance in almost 50 countries.

That includes unlimited standard calls back to Australia as well as within the country you're currently in, plus free text messaging. But buying a local prepaid SIM card for the country you're visiting is always the best value, especially when it comes to data.

You can usually pick up a local SIM card on arrival at the airport, as long as you're not in a rush to get to the hotel or your first meeting.

Phone stores in the city also sell these cards, but that means taking extra time to find and visit the store (don't forget to bring your passport, which is often needed as a form of ID).

The longer you'll be in that city and the more often you'll be returning, the better this gets.

On each return visit you can buy a 'recharge' card at the airport – and often sold at convenience stores – and you're back on the air.

There's also been increased uptake of data-only SIMs designed for the iPad, as

well as pocket-sized 3G or 4G hotspots. Apple is also selling its own Apple SIM to Australian iPad owners, so you can sign up for a prepaid data roaming plan directly from your iPad as soon as you step off the plane; however, the costs are typically much higher than buying your own prepaid SIM.

A time-saving tip on getting a prepaid SIM card for the country you're visiting is to buy it right here at home. For this reason I often recommend Aussie company SimCorner to colleagues. SimCorner sells overseas SIM cards online, but also has shops at the international terminals of Sydney and Melbourne Airports, where it will install and set up your card on the spot.

There's a range of plans for New Zealand, Asia, the US, Europe and the UK at prices that are generally comparable to what you'd pay overseas.

AT THE HOTEL

Most large hotel chains now offer free in-room internet if you're a member of their loyalty program and, given that those schemes are free to join, there's really no reason not to sign up before your next trip.

But there's always the chance you'll be staying at a hotel that asks \$25 per day, and often per device, for Wi-Fi.

That's when you'll be glad you added an Airport Express to your travel kit, at least when it comes to sharing that in-room internet connection across a few devices.

Sometimes a local SIM card can prove faster and cheaper than a hotel's own internet. Many regular travellers have invested in a pocket Wi-Fi hotspot, into which they pop a prepaid data-only SIM card – with a generous data allowance – and use that both in the room as well as when they're out and about.

It also pays to be a bit of a stickybeak. Sometimes there's an Ethernet port sitting behind the in-room telly, which will be wide open for internet access.

The latest large-screen 'smart' TVs found in upscale hotels sport a USB port, which can, in a pinch, be used to top up the battery on your iPhone or iPad (although it's slow, and you may need to leave the TV switched on during the process).



MAC GEMS

NEW SOFTWARE FROM THE MAC APP STORE



BARTENDER 2

UTILITY

Surtees Studios

\$21.94 (UPGRADE \$10.97)



Early in OS X's evolution, only a handful of system items appeared by default or by choice in the menu bar at the far right. Over time, Apple has added more options as monitors have stretched. At the same time, third-party developers have found endless reasons to stick sometimes quite sophisticated controls up there as well. It can be a mess.

Bartender appeared a few years ago to provide a way to reduce the clutter with a lot of control. It seemed imperilled when El Capitan's technical features were announced, as it relied on modified system settings in a way that the new System Integrity Protection (SIP) mode, turned on by default, wouldn't allow. Fortunately for Surtees Studios, it had a revamped version 2 already well underway, which works entirely within the new SIP guidelines for El Capitan. It also works with Yosemite.

With Bartender 2, you exercise control over your menu bar items, though it may require a restart or disabling and re-enabling each control to let the app take charge; after that initial setup, it manages them from then on. That one-time setup is a small price to pay for El Capitan compatibility.

Bartender's icon can trigger one of three behaviours: dropping down its own bar (which can be repositioned as you like), its

default behaviour or hide application menus so that you can see all menu-bar items or just those you haven't marked as hidden in per-item preferences. Hot keys can be set to bring those modes up regardless of your preference, and to use the keyboard to move through each item.

For each menu item, you can choose where and whether it appears: each menu item can be displayed normally, moved to Bartender's bar or hidden. This helps with some system items that otherwise lack a display control, like Spotlight, and some third-party apps that show a menu-bar item whether you like it or not.

A nice sub-option for each item is that, with it hidden or in the Bartender bar, you can check Show Item in Menu Bar for Item Updates. Whenever there's an update to the display of the icon or text, Bartender will promote it to the main system menu bar for a selectable period of time from five seconds to 10 minutes.

You can also Command-drag to rearrange all menu bar items, something that isn't possible without Bartender: third-party apps have to bypass Apple's restrictions to allow re-ordering and only some do, while certain system items are fixed in place.

With a truly enormous number of items in the menu bar, Bartender 2 added a search feature: display the bar by clicking its icon or using a keyboard shortcut, start typing, and matches that have been relegated to the bar appear, and can be selected by pressing Enter.

If you have a wide-enough screen – I'm typing this on a 1920 by 1080 (1080p) display – you may find Bartender unnecessary, as few applications display so many text menus at the left that they march across such a wide expanse to block dropdowns at the right.

But certain software has an inordinate set of menus. Or you may like to have the options there to avoid a trip into System Preferences or a software launch, keeping options handy but out of sight.

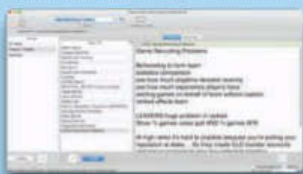
– BY GLENN FLEISHMAN





IDEA KNOT PRODUCTIVITY

Hugo Diaz
\$1.29



Ideas rarely flow through our minds in a linear way. They tend to arrive in a jumbled way that we need to synthesise and process to make them into useful information we can use and share. Idea Knot

is a tool that's designed to help capture, process, refine and share our ideas. It lets you capture ideas and make notes against them as they occur to you. The app layout is simple, but that's a good thing – you don't want this sort of app getting in the way of you capturing your ideas.



FUSION PRO 8 PRODUCTIVITY

VMware
\$238.95



Fusion Pro 8 lets you run over 200 different operating systems on your Mac – including Windows 10, allowing you to use Cortana (think of it as being like Siri for Windows) and Windows applications. As well

as being handy for running the occasional Windows session, Fusion Pro is great for developers and those who like to experiment. You can even run beta versions and older versions of OS X in virtual machines.



TONALITY PHOTOGRAPHY

Macphun
\$22.99



Tonality is a black and white image editor that works either stand alone or as a plug-in for the latest version of Photos. It lets you edit images, apply filters and use over 150

different presets to give your images some extra zing. Black and white doesn't have to be boring.



NTFS FOR MAC UTILITY

Paragon
US\$19.95



Now in its 14th version, NTFS for Mac is a very mature product. For those who work with Windows users, the ability to edit data on drives formatted using NTFS is essential. Although OS X can read data from those drives, NTFS makes it possible to edit and write data.



FANTASTICAL 2

PRODUCTIVITY

Flexbits Inc
\$49.99

Fantastical 2.1 is a calendar app that presents upcoming events in a list view, keeping that view active no matter whether you're looking at a graphical layout of a day, week, month or year. Fantastical can pick up existing accounts and calendars set in the Accounts system preferences pane or stored locally or via Exchange, as well as let you manually add other iCloud, Google, Yahoo! and Fruux accounts, or any CalDAV-compatible calendar link. Fantastical lets you use the natural-language aspect to add events and appointments. You can type a sentence like, 'Meet Fred at 10.15 am at 123 Every Street, Fitzroy, for two hours on Tuesday and set an alarm an hour before', press return and you're done.





OUTLOOK 2016 FOR MAC

BY NATHAN ALDERMAN

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The new Outlook 2016 for Mac is the same solid, dependable, occasionally cluttered app it's always been, for good or ill. If you're looking for must-have reasons to upgrade to the new Office suite in order to get the new Outlook, you won't find them here. Unless you rely heavily on Outlook's still superb integration of mail and calendars, you can probably find nimbler, more innovative email alternatives.

THE NOT-SO-BIG THREE

Microsoft's Office blog excitedly touts three major new features of Outlook 2016.

First, push email support means that new mail shows up in your inbox as it arrives, without requiring you to check for it. This is definitely convenient, especially for business users who can't afford to miss a message even by a few minutes. But it only brings the app version of Outlook up to par with its web-based Outlook 365 version, not to mention rival web clients such as Gmail.

Second, the first sentence of a given email now shows up beneath its subject in the message list, giving you a better sense of whether it's worth reading without previewing it. Again, undeniably handy, but Apple Mail and other clients have offered an identical feature for a while now.

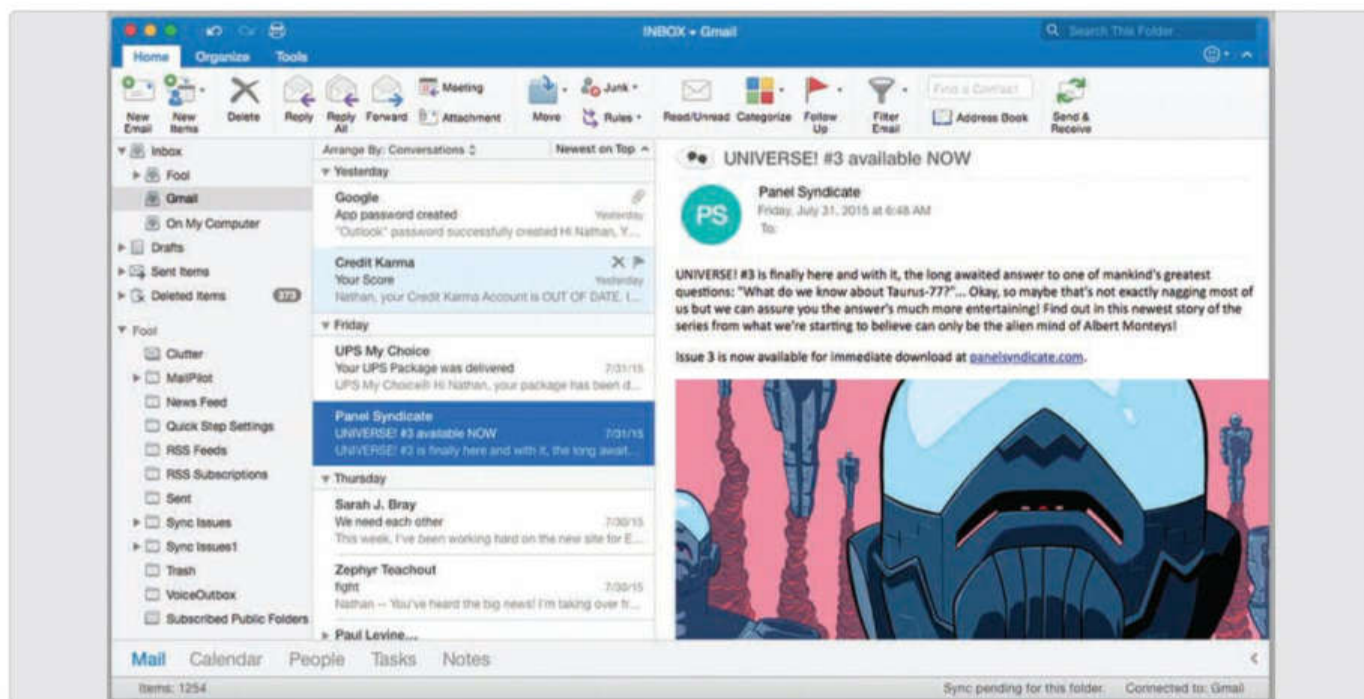
Third, a new conversation view gives you the option to group messages by thread, keeping every back-and-forth in a particular email exchange close at hand for easier reading. This idea's also nothing new, but it makes good sense. However, its implementation in Outlook 2016 leaves something to be desired.

You have to choose to sort messages by conversation – rather than a host of other

filters, from date sent or received to the account they came from – in order to see them displayed this way. Outlook basically apes Apple Mail's practice of showing a list of subject headers within the thread underneath the thread itself. To its credit, it also lets you delete or flag individual messages in the thread by rolling over those headers in the list.

If you don't sort by conversation, you'll only know a message is part of a thread if, after clicking on it, you see a speech-bubble button in the top left corner of the right-hand reading pane. Whether you click that button or use the dedicated conversation view, you're still only shown a list of message headers and – in the former case – first-sentence previews. You'll still have to click through each one at a time to follow the thread, which robs this feature of a lot of its time-saving usefulness. In Apple Mail and other clients, you simply click once to open an entire thread and scroll through its contents in chronological order.

Outlook 2016 also adds the long overdue capability to create custom email signatures, although I liked its option to designate different signatures for different



accounts, and for new messages or replies within those accounts. In addition, it now syncs your category names and colours across its Mac, PC and web versions, and lets you archive messages online to free up space in your mail account.

DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

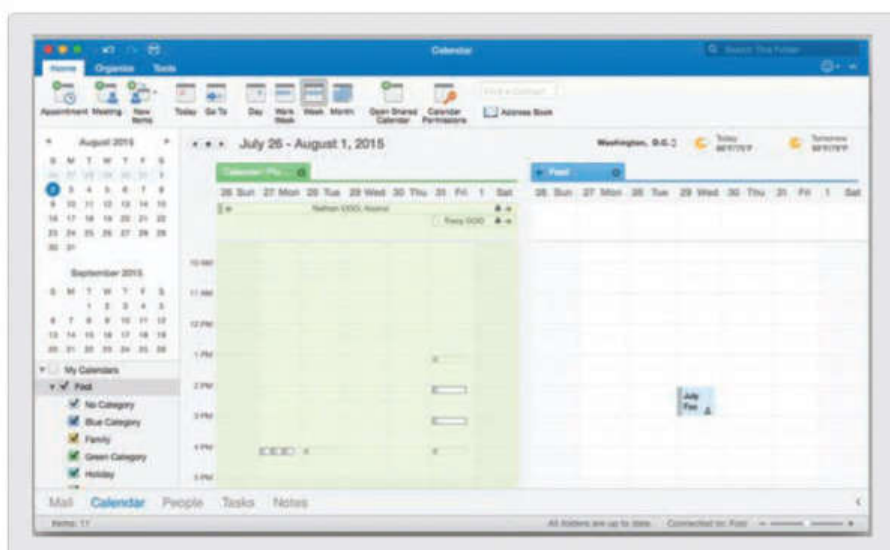
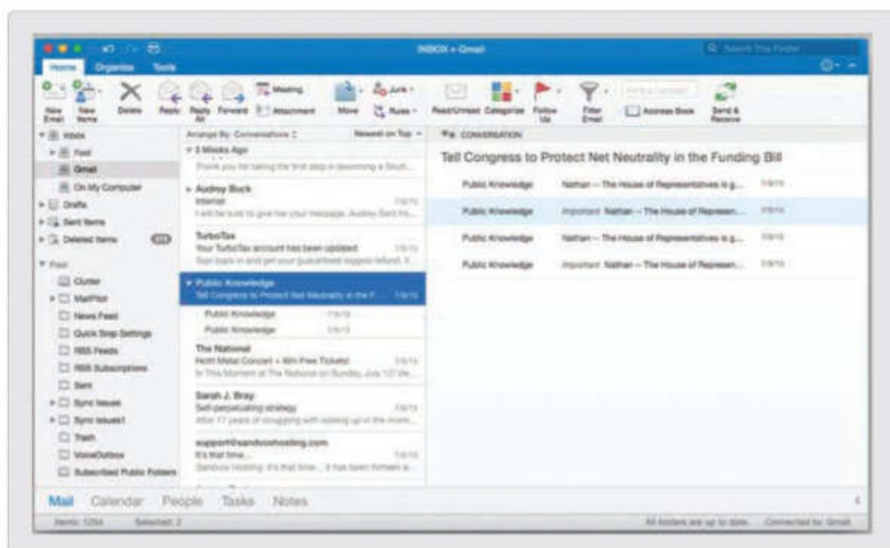
Minor adjustments aside, you'll find all of Outlook's usual strengths and shortcomings in its newest version. Its best qualities include the smart and highly usable way that the program ties together email, tasks and calendars. New features here include side-by-side displays of multiple calendars, weather forecasts for your area and the ability to propose a new time when invited to a meeting.

I also have nothing but praise for Outlook's account setup skills. Adding both my Office 365 account from work and my personal Gmail account took mere seconds, and required nothing more than my email address and password. Outlook 2016's savvy configuration tools did the rest and, after some initial loading, all my mail popped into view.

Most of the Outlook's modest 2016 facelift is perfectly pleasant. Navigating between Outlook's different abilities – Mail, Calendar, People, Tasks and Notes – is as simple as clicking those words at the bottom of the main window and, within each view, the information you need is laid out clearly and conveniently. I liked the calming, easy-on-the-eye interface colours, too.

However, the ribbon running across the top of the window still has yet to meet an icon it didn't like, cramming them together in inconsistent sizes and configurations. Outlook 2016 can also occasionally take its sweet time launching, or checking for new mail when it first opens.

Bottom line. It's Microsoft Outlook: you almost certainly know what to expect from it. It does its job well, but brings nothing new to the table. If you need Exchange-based mail for work, or want a desktop alternative to the very good Outlook 365 web client, it won't let you down. ☒





EXCEL 2016 FOR MAC

BY ROB GRIFFITHS

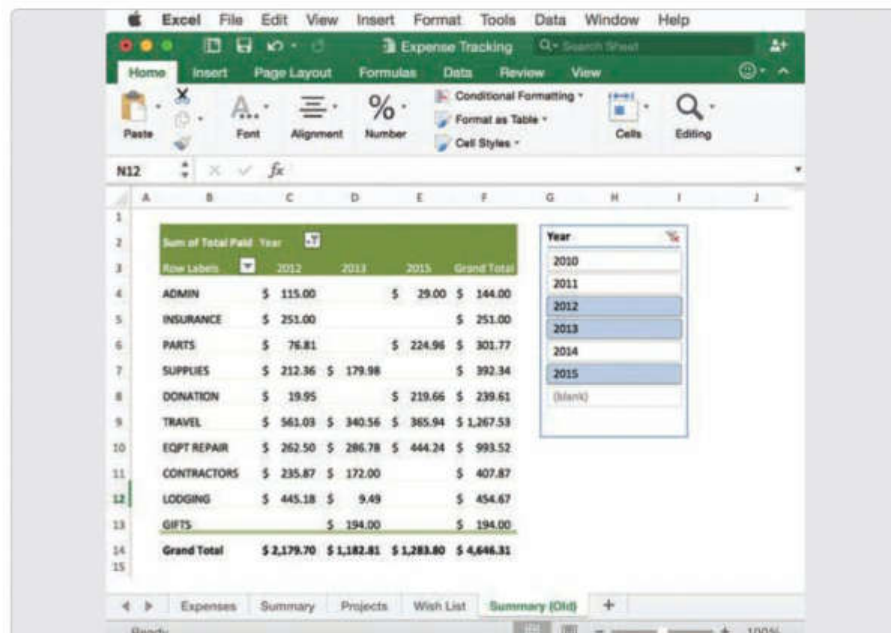
One of the advantages of doing the last Office 2016 product review is that I can leverage work others have done to save you, the reader, from some redundant explanation. So, if you haven't yet, check out the reviews of Outlook, PowerPoint and Word.

Much of what you'll read about in those apps applies to Excel 2016 for Mac, too: Mac-specific features like multi-touch gestures, full screen support, Retina graphics, a cleaned-up and easily-hidden ribbon, a fixed task pane that replaces floating palettes for formatting, integrated support for OneDrive and excellent cross-platform file compatibility. You can read more about these features in the above mentioned reviews; they work just the same way in the new Excel. (As with the other apps, you can only presently get Excel 2016 if you're an Office 365 subscriber.)

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

When you launch Excel 2016, you'll be greeted by Excel's clean new appearance. You can choose from a coloured header (new in 2016) or the usual grey header from previous releases. Workbooks with multiple tabs get a much cleaner tab bar, losing the fake 3D appearance. Coloured tabs are now coloured with a thin bar, instead of a graduated fill on the entire tab, making it easier to read tab names. Overall, I found the new interface pleasant and easier to use than in older versions of Excel.

Excel includes the Smart Lookup feature found in other Office apps. Smart Lookup uses Bing to show contextual information for a highlighted word –



while this is undoubtedly useful in Word, I didn't really find myself using it much while working on spreadsheets.

So what's new and unique to Excel 2016? Quite a few things, starting with the removal of the Standard and Formatting toolbars. While you could hide these in Excel 2011, they're completely gone – replaced by the task pane – in Excel 2016. I don't miss them at all, as they were redundant and took up screen space.

Also new is greatly improved sharing. Save your file to OneDrive, and you can then use a sharing button to invite people via their email address, copy a link you can then email to others or send the workbook as either a PDF or native workbook attachment. Recipients can (assuming you grant permission) edit your file, even if they don't own Excel, through Microsoft's web-hosted Excel app.

Fans of pivot tables will find a new slicer tool that greatly increases the usability of pivot tables. A slicer is a way to limit the data you see in a pivot table. In a pivot table that shows years of sales by salesperson, for example, you can use slicers to restrict the table to one or more years, or to one or more salespeople.

Another 'new' feature is the inclusion of the Analysis ToolPak add-on. I say new in quotes because, while new to

Excel 2016, long-time Excel vets will remember the Analysis ToolPak from the pre-OS X days. If you need to do complex statistical and/or engineering analysis – think Anova, Fourier analysis, Regression etc – you'll find the Analysis ToolPak invaluable. Also included are a number of formulas that were previously found only in Excel 2013 for Windows, improving cross-platform compatibility. Again in the interest of cross-platform compatibility, many Excel for Windows shortcuts now work on the Mac, which is quite useful if you regularly work on both platforms.

Excel also makes charting easier by analysing your data and letting you select a recommended chart from a convenient dropdown menu. Select the data you want graphed, click the Recommended Charts button, and then browse the mini chart previews to find the one that best matches what you're trying to say.

WHAT'S GONE

If you're a serious user of Excel's macro facilities, you are in for a big letdown: Excel's 2016 support for macros is basically missing. While you can create and record macros, the macro editor is crippled. There's no way to insert procedures, modules etc. About all you can do is hand-edit a recorded macro. Further,


you can't create custom menu commands, as you could in prior versions of Excel. In short, if you need macros, stick to Excel 2011. After the great progress made with macros in the 2011 release, this is a real letdown.

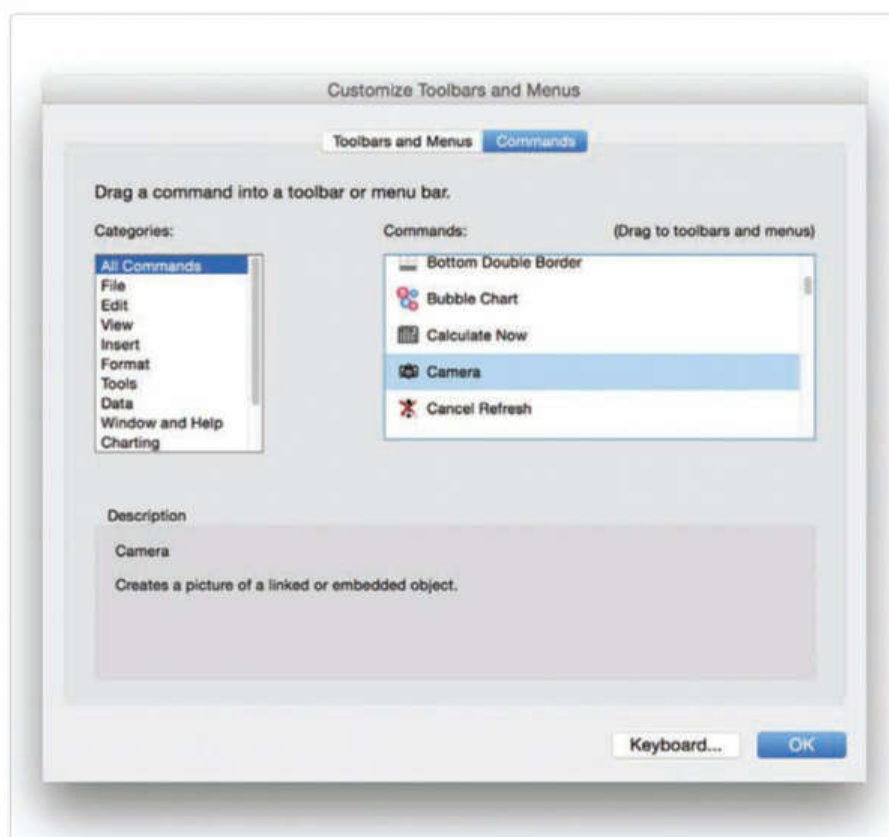
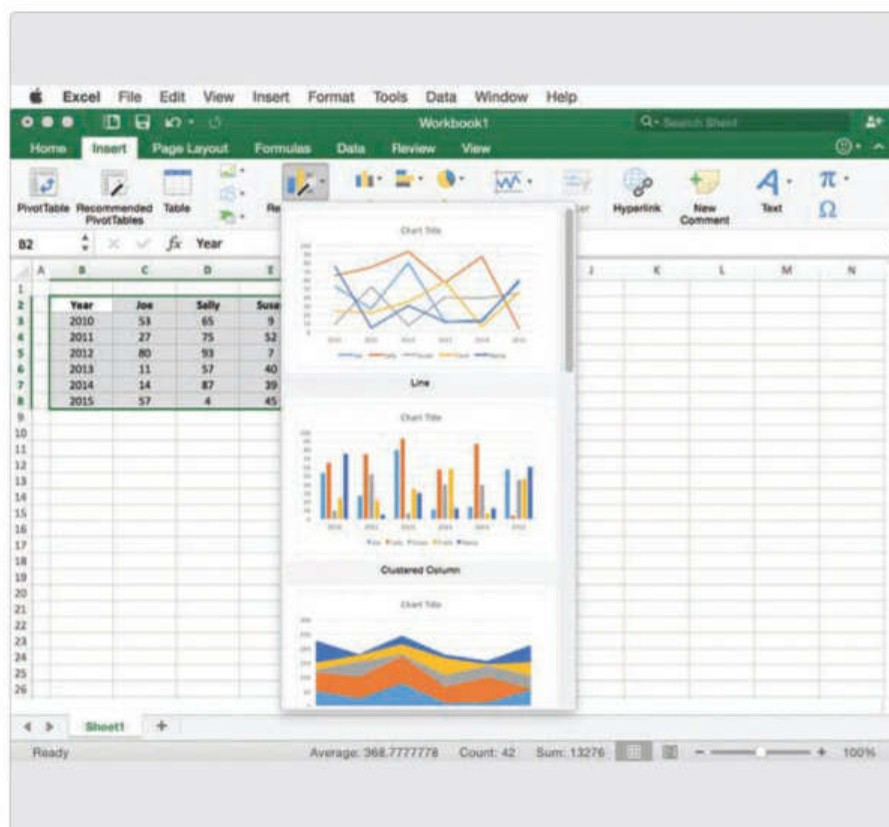
Assuming the macro issue doesn't affect you, the only other real problem I have with Excel 2016 is the loss of customisability of keyboard shortcuts and menus. In older Excel versions, you could easily customise which commands show on which menus, and even create entirely new menus containing just the commands you specify.

You could also assign one or more keyboard shortcuts to any Excel command, including commands that you can't program via OS X's keyboard shortcut interface. The dialogue that handles all of this customisation is missing from Excel 2016; if you don't like what Microsoft gave you for menus and certain shortcuts, you're stuck with them.

A related issue is that some familiar – and useful – shortcuts are now changed or gone. Control-I and Control-K used to insert and delete rows or columns; now you must use three fingers (Shift-Command-Equals) to add a row, and Command-Minus to remove a row. You also used to be able to Option-click a row or column to quickly add a new blank row or column; this no longer works. If you use the keyboard a lot, you'll want to open Excel's help and search 'keyboard shortcuts', where you'll find a huge list of shortcuts.

Bottom line. If you're an Excel user who doesn't rely on macros, and doesn't need to customise your menus and commands, Excel 2016 has a lot going for it. The new interface is pleasant, the cross-platform features are a welcome addition, the performance is very good and the Mac-specific features make Excel feel as native as any other Mac app.

But if you do need macros and customisability, then you're going to have to stick to Excel 2011... and that's too bad, because Excel 2016 is a solid release in every other regard. 





XCODEGHOST: APP STORE MALWARE SHOWS THE WEAKEST LINKS AND APPLE'S ADVANTAGE

BY GLENN FLEISHMANN

As malware goes, XcodeGhost is unimpressive. Bundled into versions of Apple's Xcode development environment for iOS, OS X and watchOS, XcodeGhost was distributed within China, but not from Apple's own servers. When apps were built using the infected Xcode, XcodeGhost hitched a lift.

It's instructive to look at how this happened, how it may be prevented in the future, and how minimal the impact was, despite the potential. Apple and its customers were lucky by chance and by design.

CHINA'S RESTRICTIONS

The government in China makes it hard for average citizens and businesses to interact outside its borders. Over time, the Great Firewall of China has become even more stringent, frequently blocking virtual private network (VPN) connections and other encrypted sessions. Academics and

scientists are kept from having access to up-to-date information in their field, and there's concern it will lead to long-term expatriate living by those who can work in less restrictive countries, as well as causing non-Chinese companies to shift or consider shifting operations.

Piracy has also been rampant in China since the dawn of personal computers. At one time, this was largely due to the inequitable pricing of software between China's developing economy and the US, Europe and other so-called developed nations. As that gap has narrowed – significantly so for the growing Chinese middle class and elite – piracy remains entrenched, in part because the government rarely enforces penalties, where they exist.

The inserted code could have been far worse, but still highly limited, due to how Apple sandboxes each app and the restrictions on information access.

As is well established, even in the face of China's current slowdown in growth, the iPhone is exceedingly popular there. Developers want to make software to feed this market, which they do both through the authorised Apple App Store and through stores that work with jailbroken iPhones.

This combination of factors means that developers in China are used to

downloading sketchy software, jailbreaking phones and developing software both for the App Store and knock-offs. It also means they have huge problems retrieving large files.

SKETCHY SITUATIONS ARE THE NORM

All this may help explain to those outside China's market why developers would download Xcode from in-country servers, disable security warnings and fail to check whether a distribution had been tampered with. It's just part of the routine: errors and warnings are ignored because they're so common. Apple released a FAQ for its customers about XcodeGhost ('Why would a developer put customers at risk by downloading counterfeit software?') and another gently reminded developers to look for the seal of authenticity.

This is despite dozens and possibly hundreds of apps being infected with a malicious procedure, and despite the software affected being on tens of millions of iOS devices. Some reporting indicated that hundreds of millions of users could be affected, but it conflated the total installed base of software popular in China, like WeChat, and the number of iOS devices on which those packages were installed.

Apple has pulled dozens of apps infected with XcodeGhost, and the impact of the particular exploit was very slight. XcodeGhost can communicate with remote servers, which have been shut down, and was thought initially to be able to phish passwords. Fortunately, it could not.

The inserted code could have been far worse, but still limited, due to how Apple sandboxes each app and the restrictions on information access. WeChat, among a few others, had the biggest hole, because of access to contact lists, which would allow the malware's designers potentially to harvest that data and then use it for customised phishing and other attacks.

WAKE-UP CALL

This should be yet another wake-up call for developers and Apple, despite the contained fallout. Why isn't Apple


actively monitoring Xcode downloads in other countries? Given that the modified version has been kicking around since March, you'd think this would be a routine part of its integrity procedures – and one hopes it is now. We can also imagine more automated checks for previously unseen modules appearing across multiple submitted apps that engage in internet communication.

Apple may be in the middle of a tug of war with China over being able to host full, code-signed downloads of Xcode on content-distribution network servers within China for all we know. But it's possible for local servers to host valid, signed copies of Xcode – if against Apple's rules – as long as developers check.

The odd reaction comes from the anti-malware world, which still doesn't get why Apple puts the locks in place that it

does to minimise the reach of a malware insertion like this one. Lookout, which makes mobile safety apps, posted a blog entry about XcodeGhost that contained this remarkable statement:

"Unfortunately, due to limitations Apple has placed on apps on the iOS platform, Lookout Mobile Security for consumers is not able to detect whether you have an infected app installed in iOS 9. Apple has made recent changes to iOS that make it more difficult for one app to understand which other apps are present on the device."

This is a good thing, folks. While it's inconvenient in some ways for certain utilities, the less each app is allowed to know about all others except through tightly defined parameters, the more likely integrity and privacy remain preserved. 

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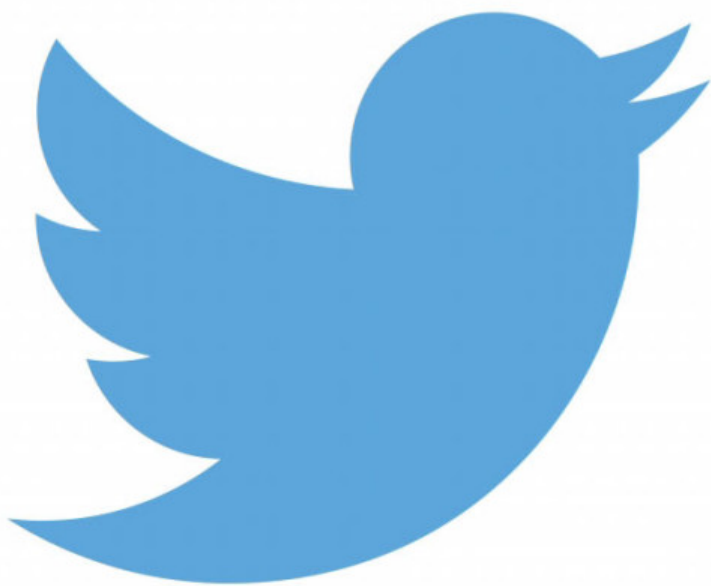


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Twitter on the Mac: do your job or get out of the way

Three years ago, Twitter broke its covenant with the third-party developers who helped fuel its initial growth and create some of its most innovative features. The message was clear: Twitter was in charge of its own platform and, while other Twitter apps would be tolerated, they would only be so in limited fashion and for a limited time.

Today Twitter is a company in turmoil, with investors such as Chris Sacca clamouring for change after the exit of former CEO Dick Costolo and the interim takeover by co-founder Jack Dorsey. What can't be disputed is that Twitter's Mac app – introduced in 2011 – is an extreme example of how Twitter has squandered the past few years. It drove third-party developers off its platform in order to exert control, and then proceeded to bungle its app development.

Twitter for iOS, while it has its issues, is generally considered to be a competent app. (I don't use it – I'm

still clinging to Twittrific. And, of course, so many people love Tweetbot for iPhone.)

Unfortunately, Twitter has withheld most of its new innovations (such as the contents of the Notifications tab, including a list of who follows, retweets and favourites you) from third-party apps, so even the most impressive third-party app is hobbled out of the starting gate.

On the Mac, though, it's been a disaster. I use Twitter for Mac every day because I rely on the contents of that Notifications tab, and because Tweetbot has never really appealed to me. (Unfortunately, the Mac version of Twittrific is so old that it's essentially unusable.)

How bad is Twitter for Mac? So bad that it fails to support numerous features introduced with fanfare by Twitter itself. The new Mute feature, which lets you block out communications from people you don't want to hear from without blocking them

entirely? Not only can you not initiate a mute from Twitter for Mac, but I've also found that when I mute someone from Twitter's web interface, many of their tweets still appear in my timeline.

Tweet quoting, rolled out earlier this year, is still not supported on the Mac version of Twitter. Tweetbot (Mac and iPhone) and Twittrific (iOS) were both updated to support it almost immediately, and are the richer for it.

Then there are the bugs. Too frequently I click on a tweet in Twitter for Mac, only to have it display the contents of an entirely different Tweet in my timeline. I've seen this bug consistently for months, if not years. I also find the app will often bog down and become unusable until I quit, but then again, sometimes it just quits on its own.

But perhaps Twitter's just given up on the Mac. The tweet announcing tweet-quoting specifically didn't mention the Mac version, and the app itself hasn't been updated since October 2014. I use Twitter on the

desktop all the time, but I understand how mobile should probably be Twitter's focus.

WHOSE APP IS IT ANYWAY?

Still, couldn't this have all been avoided? This is Twitter's platform. It could've placed stricter rules on the third-party apps favoured by geeks like me while allowing them to continue innovating on the platform and growing their own businesses, but the rules were too onerous and development is slowly grinding to a halt.

If Twitter doesn't have the resources or inclination to properly support platforms like the Mac (or, quite frankly, iOS and Android), perhaps it should rethink the decisions made by the prior regime and find a way to let other developers apply their expertise to the problem. Alternatively, maybe Twitter should figure out how to use its huge team of app developers to create first-class native apps for not just iOS and Android, but the Mac and Windows too.

Finally, there's the nuclear option: force everyone on the desktop to use Twitter's website. After all, there's no native Facebook app for the Mac. This is true, and yet I use Twitter far more than I use Facebook for just this reason! With a dedicated Twitter app, I can dip in and out of the social stream as it suits me. I never remember to look at Facebook when I'm sitting at my desk.

It's a tumultuous time for Twitter. It needs new leadership and the overall Twitter product needs to get a lot better. I agree with Chris Sacca's argument that Twitter could truly become our water cooler when it comes to live events, from TV shows to sports to breaking news. There's a lot of work to be done. But as Twitter gets its house in order, maybe it can consider giving a little love to its apps? They sure could use it, especially Twitter for Mac. And if you can't bother making a good Mac app, could you consider handing the keys to competent Mac developers and stepping out of the way? 🐦





**GEAR
GIZMOS
GOODIES**

GADGETGUIDE

LifeProof Nüüd for iPad Air 2

Your iPad Air packs in some pretty sophisticated tech in a very compact body. While Apple uses some of the best materials of any technology maker, there are situations your iPad just isn't made for. The LifeProof Nüüd cocoons your iPad Air 2 — there are versions for almost every other iOS device — so that it's protected from water, snow and dust, as well as falls.

The Nüüd offers plenty of protection. Rather than covering the iPad's touchscreen, the Nüüd forms a waterproof and dustproof seal around the edge of the display. This ensures no contaminants can get into the iPad's inner workings while ensuring you can still use the touchscreen easily.

Every port is still accessible courtesy of well-sealed flaps and other covers. Even Touch ID can still be used, although I did find the top edge of the sensor was slightly covered, so I needed to modify how we used the sensor.

The headphone port is protected from the elements by a small screw-in cover. When the cover is removed, you need to use a short cable extender that's

supplied in the box. Otherwise my standard headphones struggled to reach the port. However, this is a minor inconvenience as I leave the external on the end of headphones permanently.

If you want to mount your iPad in the car or boat, the Nüüd for iPad Air is compatible with LifeProof's QuickMount accessory system. I've been using this system with the Nüüd case for the iPhone 6 on a bicycle and it works very well.

LifeProof says the Nüüd is waterproof to over two metres for one hour and drop proof to about 1.3 metres. I dropped my iPad a couple of times without any ill effects.

The LifeProof Nüüd for iPad 2 weighs about 270g and adds about 1.5cm to the height and width of the iPad with about 0.8cm to the thickness.

LifeProof / \$169.95 / www.lifeproof.com

— BY ANTHONY CARUANA



Twelve South HiRise

Like the iPod, iPhone and iPad before it, the Apple Watch is spawning an ecosystem of accessories and extras that make it as much a commercial platform as a piece of serious tech. The Twelve South HiRise is an elegant addition to your bedside table.

Out of the box, the HiRise comes in two parts: a base and the stand. Once we removed the plastic cover on the base we threaded the Apple Watch's charging cable through a channel. The cable could then be locked into a channel on the vertical stand (which we screwed in place using the tool and screws provided), where there's a rubber-edged ring in which the Apple Watch's inductive charger can sit.

Although that all sounds a little complicated, the construction process took just a couple of minutes.

As all the cables are neatly tucked away, the HiRise actually declutters the bedside table or desk.

Andrew Green, Twelve South's creative director, says, "HiRise makes overnight charging routine by providing a fixture that is far easier – and habit-forming – than a charging cable that falls to the floor and requires fumbling with at night. The easier and more convenient the charging stand, the better."

One of the challenges of creating accessories for a new device is keeping up with change. Unfortunately, the design of the HiRise pre-dates the arrival of watchOS 2 and the new Night Stand feature.

The HiRise is designed to hold the Apple Watch in place with the watch band draped over the top of the HiRise and in a cut-out about halfway down the stand. However, nightstand mode works when the Apple Watch is on its side. With our Apple Watch Sport, equipped with the lighter, fluoroelastomer sport band, the watch stayed in place with the charger's magnets. However, this may be more challenging with some of the heavier, metal Apple Watch bands.

TwelveSouth

\$69.00

www.twelvesouth.com



Incipio Feather Case

The Incipio Feather Case adds a layer of protection to the body of the 12in MacBook – there are also versions for other portable Macs. Although it's not a ruggedised case, the Feather offers a light layer of high density Plexonium polycarbonate that ensures dents and scratches are a thing of the past.

Incipio

\$59.95

www.incipio.com



Lightning cables

Cables don't have to be single colour, pieces of rubber and wire that look boring. Eastern Collective has a range of cables, variously named Cosmic, Timber and Confetti etc. The braided casings add some colour and zing to a product rarely given a second glance by most of us.

Eastern Collective

US\$25.95

www.easterncollective.com



SPK-WFQ10 Wireless Wi-Fi multi-room speaker

The SPK-WFQ10 is an All-Play multi-room speaker – All-Play is an open system used by several manufacturers. The dual band SPK-WFQ10 Wi-Fi speaker connects to Wi-Fi without a bridging device, and can be controlled on the 'Qualcomm AllPlay Jukebox' app. It supports wireless music streaming from services such as Spotify and AllPlay Radio, internet radio or music from a user's own library.

LASER

\$179.95

www.laserco.com.au



Synology router RT1900ac

If you've been hanging on to your router for a while, it may be time to update to an 802.11ac unit, now that all of Apple's products are there. The Synology RT1900ac is one of the easiest to use routers we've seen and its USB 3 port can be used to share storage or even connect a 3G/4G modem as a backup connection.

Synology

\$199

www.synology.com



LIFE IN THE NEW IOS WORLD

BY ANTHONY CARUANA

When we plan each issue of *Macworld Australia* we take a look at what has been going on in the Apple universe and come up with some ideas for the different stories, reviews and features. Originally, the plan was to have a story on the recently released iOS 9 (which has already seen two updates as we're writing this), another on the new iPhone 6s and, possibly, how iOS 9 runs on older devices.

But like the German military strategist Helmuth von Moltke once said, "No battle plan survives contact with the enemy." In our case, the article plan fell over at the first paragraph because it's difficult, when looking at new hardware and software at the same time, to separate the two.

That's Apple's 'secret sauce' or '11 secret herbs and spices'. It's not that the software is designed to fit the hardware or the hardware is made to match the software. It's that the two are designed together as a single entity.

THE IPHONE 6S

Sit an iPhone 6 and an iPhone 6s next to each other and you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference between the devices. Other than the fine print and the addition of an 's' on the back, the two are identical in every other way. When Apple said, during the iPhone 6s announcement, "The only thing that's changed is everything", the company didn't mean how the iPhone looks.

Other than the addition of rose gold (most of us call that pink) as a new colour option, the iPhone 6s looks exactly the same as its predecessor.

What we did notice after a couple of weeks of using the iPhone 6s (we

pre-ordered and purchased a gold 64GB iPhone 6s) were some significant enhancements. These aren't the kinds of things that will make it to a flashy ad, but they have made a great deal of difference to us.

For starters, the iPhone 6s is significantly faster than the iPhone 6. When we swapped to the newer phone, we took a backup of our old phone and restored that to the new one. In almost every activity, the iPhone 6s felt faster than the iPhone 6.

Typically, manufacturer claims of improved performance can be taken with a pinch of salt. Many of the benchmarks we've seen used over the years are skewed towards very specific use scenarios that don't reflect reality.

Apple boasts that the new A9 chip has a 70 percent faster CPU and 90 percent faster GPU than the A8 it supersedes (and that has landed in the iPad mini). After a couple of weeks, we can tell this is a far faster device than the iPhone 6.

We often flick back and forth between Safari and other apps. With the iPhone 6, we often found pages needed to reload every time we switched back to Safari as, it seemed, the iPhone 6 didn't have enough system memory to hold a web page.

The iPhone 6s has twice the system memory of the iPhone 6 – jumping from 1GB to 2GB. Although that may not seem huge, it makes a mountain of difference for us. Being able to quickly toggle between Mail and Safari without having to wait for pages to reload is a significant improvement.

There's little doubt in our minds the combination of a faster processor and increased memory has delivered in spades.

According to Apple, iOS 9 is meant to add at least an hour of battery run time to older iPhones, iPads and iPods. Our upgraded iPhone 6 certainly has a little more juice in the tank at the end of the day and the iPhone 6s is lasting longer as well.

One more thing... the new Touch ID 2 is significantly faster than the original hardware. We typically use a thumb for unlocking the iPhone and the responsiveness of the new sensor is faster.

3D TOUCH

When Apple introduced multi-touch with the original iPhone, from a usability point of view it was a revolution. We suddenly went from being able to only tap on a single spot on a display to being able to pinch and swipe, and use multi-finger gestures.

When we first saw 3D Touch in action we thought it would kick off a similar wave of innovation. It's early days though, so not many app developers have updated their apps although some have.

Most of Apple's apps have been given a 3D Touch makeover. For example, pressing on the iBooks icon provides a list of the books you're currently reading. In our case, we've been listening to audiobooks in the car, so we're able to quickly open the book and pick up from where we left off without having to launch the app.

This may not sound like a big deal, but it reduces the number of screen taps and brings what we're doing to the fore.

Similarly, the Camera app makes it easy to record videos and take photos with fewer taps.



At the time of writing, not many third party apps had added 3D Touch, although Evernote had – the ability to create notes, take photos and set reminders have been added to a new menu that launches when you 3DTouch the app icon.

We expect popular social media apps such as Facebook and Instagram to add similar options soon. Apple's communication apps – FaceTime, Mail, Messages and Phone – all make it easy to call or message recent contacts using a 3D Touch menu.

Tapping on names or other items in lists within 3D Touch-enabled apps opens context menus as well.

3D Touch is a perfect example of the fusion between hardware and software that allows Apple to pioneer new user interfaces.

The new display technology Apple uses allows the screen to be pressure sensitive. Combined with the Taptic Engine, your screen presses receive haptic feedback. When you 3D Touch an icon for an app that is 3D Touch enabled, the screen 'responds' by tapping back once. Doing the same on an app that doesn't support 3D Touch there's a short vibration.

The differences are subtle, but deliver enough information for you to know the difference between a positive and negative response from an app.

PHOTOS AND MOVIES

For a long time, the battle of which smartphone had the best camera was measured by just one metric: megapixels. Apple took a different road, focusing on image quality rather than image size.

In the meantime, the world has moved on. We have seen 4K video become commonplace – at least on TVs. And Apple's Retina Display has upped the ante on what we can see on a screen.

When the new iPhone was announced back in September, much was made of a new technical innovation called 'deep trench isolation'. In simple terms, as a camera sensor becomes denser, it becomes more difficult to stop the light hitting one sensor element interfering with adjacent sensor elements. Apple has developed a

technique and hardware that prevents light from interfering with adjacent sensors.

The result is high resolution images are less 'noisy'.

In practice this means, if Apple's claims are to be believed, its 12MP offers superior image quality to that of other 12MP cameras.

In a week of shooting photos and the odd video, we've been impressed. Being able to quickly jump into video mode, using 3D Touch on the Camera app icon, makes it easy to capture moments spontaneously.

At such high resolutions, a solid image stabiliser and auto-focus are pretty important. We tried pretty hard to take a blurry picture. Even panning across a scene quickly and hitting the button resulted in clear images.

This is a very forgiving camera. Anyone trying to snap a child doing something funny or interesting will lament the number of blurry images they've taken trying to get one decent shot. With the iPhone 6s, finishing with a blurry image is a challenge.

The new Live Photos feature is neat, but we're not sure it's as big a deal as Apple made out during the iPhone 6s and iOS 9 introduction. Essentially, Live Photos captures a short segment of video just before the shutter closes on the camera. It's a nice novelty, but that's about it.

Video is quite incredible and is another example of how Apple's control of everything works well. The ability to shoot 4K video and edit it directly – using the newest version of iMovie – on the iPhone is something unimaginable not so long ago.

The quality of the video is stunning. I'm sure that professional videographers will stick to their professional cameras, but an iPhone 6s delivers image quality that's at least as good as professional gear from just a year or two ago.

Apple's biggest challenge in delivering great still and moving images is not in the sensor and processing hardware. The challenge remains in the optics, which is where DSLR and professional video cameras have the advantage.

In the same way that Kodak missed the digital photography boat, sticking to its guns with film, the consumer camera business is facing difficult times, as the iPhone 6s and all the smartphones that follow it are rendering compact consumer cameras obsolete.

The ultimate question is: "Which is the best camera?" The answer is simple – it's the one you have with you. The iPhone 6s means I rarely see the need to carry a compact camera.

Incidentally, there is a cost with capturing all those high-res photos and movies; you'll churn through your iPhone's storage quickly. Each minute of 4K video captured at 30 frames per second will consumer about 375MB of space. If you drop the resolution back to 1080p HD at 60fps (frames per second), that drops to 200MB per minute. The lowest video capture resolution is 720p at 30fps, which uses just 60MB per minute.

RETINA FLASH

We're not sure whether it's progress or narcissism, but selfies are a big part of the personal photography scene. The trouble is putting a flash on the front of an iPhone makes it look a little ugly.

Apple's solution to this is Retina Flash. This uses the iPhone's display and an ambient light sensor to determine the lighting level as you shoot your selfie with the 5MP FaceTime camera and uses the iPhone's display as the flash.

It's a nifty trick that looks simple, but highlights how Apple's control of the hardware and software comes together to create an innovative solution to a problem.

HEY SIRI

With all the tweaks made to battery life and some heavy-duty engineering changes to Siri, the Hey Siri feature is now available all the time. Previously, it only worked when you were connected to mains power.

When we first started our iPhone 6s, the setup process asked us to say "Hey Siri" a few times in order to train the voice recognition. Once that was done, our iPhone responded promptly whenever we said "Hey Siri".

We asked Siri a number of different questions – for a laugh, ask Siri, “What is zero divided by zero” – and it (she?) responded promptly. We asked it for the weather at various locales across the world, exchange rates and for directions.

Although most answers were delivered as expected, there were a few quirks.

For example, we asked Siri, “What’s the exchange rate between US dollars and Australian dollars.” Rather than delivering a response, it pointed to a number of search results from the web.

We also asked Siri what the travel time was to a contact. Siri didn’t answer the question. Instead, it launched Maps and got me directions.

Siri can read messages back as well. We asked Siri to read back our most recent text message, which it did and then gave the opportunity to dictate a reply.

The natural language engine used by Siri was also able to respond to queries such as “Where is the nearest burger place?” As well as reading out the name and distance to the restaurant, Siri could, if we asked, call the restaurant to make a reservation.

iOS 9 LIKES AND DISLIKES

After a couple of weeks of using the final release of iOS 9 on our new iPhone 6s and beta versions on our iPad Air 2, we’ve come to the conclusion that we like most of the changes that have been made.

The new San Francisco typeface has irked some users, but after the initial jarring of the change it hasn’t made a difference in our iOS devices’ usability.

Alerts now have rounded corners. It’s an aesthetic change and it’s arguable that it’s not a big deal, but we like the new look.

On the iPad, the new Split View and Picture in Picture capability are really handy. We use FaceTime almost daily for meetings. Being able to keep FaceTime on the screen while looking at a document is incredibly handy. And being able to keep our Inbox, Messages or other app open at the same time as our main task is very handy.

Most of the enhancements delivered through iOS 9 represent subtle tweaks

or respond to usability limitations. Our suspicion is it’s taken until the arrival of the A8 and A9 processors for Apple to feel confident multi-tasking could work smoothly.

Our biggest dislike comes from the Search screen and changes made to task switching.

Double-pressing the Home button brings up the task switching interface. Under iOS 8, you could see a complete snapshot of the screen with the app icon under each window. With iOS 9, things have been rearranged slightly so that each of the open apps overlaps the others.

We also used to have a list of recently accessed contents on the screen. That’s now been moved to Search screen. However, depending on how you access the Search screen you see different things.

Scrolling to the right from the first page of your home screen brings up a screen with a Search bar, your last four recent contacts, the last four applications you have used and some recent news. Dragging down from the centre of the Home screen brings up a search screen with a Search bar at the top and four ‘Siri app suggestions’.

We can’t fathom a logical reason why these would be different.

As well as being inconsistent, we much preferred the iOS 8 task switcher as it was easier to navigate and provided a clearer view of what was open. However, we accept that this is a subjective view and your opinion may be different.

We also hit a snag with the new Wallet app that replaces Passbook.

In the past, we could easily get a boarding pass from our preferred airline into Passbook by simply pressing the ‘Add to Passbook’ button at the end of the online check-in process on our iPhone. At the time of writing that didn’t work although we expect the airlines to modify their systems to fall into Apple’s line.

We’ve also heard reports of some apps no longer working correctly. As we always recommend when a new operating system becomes available, check for app updates and if there’s an app you absolutely rely on, check with the developers.

This is particularly important as home automation and health apps become more intertwined with the iPhone ecosystem.

IPHONE 6S LIKES AND DISLIKES

It would be easy, just looking at the outside of the iPhone 6s to conclude it’s a minor point upgrade. Outwardly, there’s very little to distinguish it from the iPhone 6. But under the covers, a new CPU, integration of the M7 motion sensor, the new Taptic Engine, enhanced Touch ID, significantly improved camera and changes to the Retina Display to enable 3D Touch mean that this is a substantially different piece of hardware.

In practice, everything the iPhone 6 did the iPhone 6s does... significantly faster. But it adds 3D Touch, which changes the way we use smartphones.

As for dislikes, there are some people who simply don’t want a smartphone that’s as large as the iPhone 6s or its big brother, the iPhone 6s Plus. We know a few people who are holding on to their iPhone 5 and iPhone 5s because the newer models are too large for them to handle comfortably.

It would be great if Apple released a 4in iPhone 6s mini that delivered all the new features in a form factor that suited the smaller-handed members of the population. ☹️





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You'll find few enemies so fierce and opinions as strong as those discussing which Twitter client is the best. Tweetbot has been my client of choice for years, for both iOS and OS X.

Tweetbot 4 for iOS is now out, and shows why my trust is well-placed. The product continues to mature and deepen, incorporating a lot of small, welcome changes and building in new features made available by Twitter, as well as adding some large ones. Notably, a new statistics and activity view gives you quick and easy insight into how people are reacting to what you tweet.

The biggest improvement is landscape support, while the iPad and iPhone 6 Plus and 6s Plus receive a new column view, allowing side-by-side displays within the app. The image picker is much faster and better as well.

The biggest question for any Twitter client is: why not just choose the free software provided by Twitter or use its mobile-optimised website? Twitter's software immediately adds any new features the social network deploys, letting third parties wait for an official developer release. But it's kind of a mess.

Tweetbot better reflects how I use Twitter, keeping categories

and kinds of things separate. Most critically, it incorporates a sophisticated set of mute options, which can be used effectively to avoid unfollowing or blocking people or groups during periods of time (or even forever) that you don't want in your timeline.

When launching Tweetbot for the first time, you'll find that it has already picked up the Twitter accounts you've entered in iOS. You can also add other accounts manually. For those who manage multiple accounts for fun, work or profit, Tweetbot has easy ways to swap among them.

Each account can have separate settings for uploading images, videos, marking the last-read tweet, read-later saving and URL shortening. Some of these default to Twitter's options, but Tweetbot supports major alternative services.

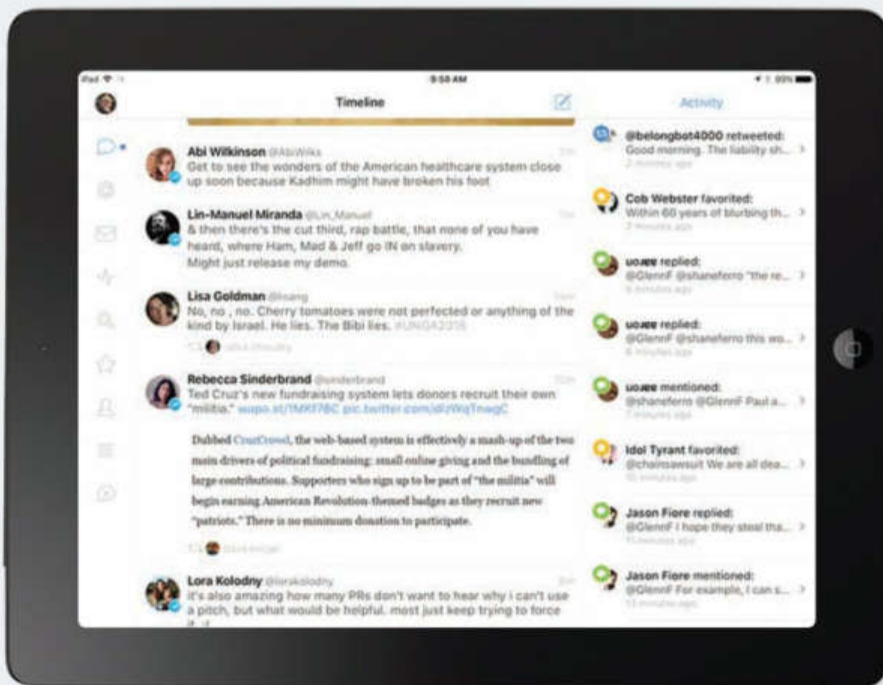
The robust threading support in Tweetbot lets you follow lengthy discussions, and dive deep to see offshoots.

The one flaw Tweetbot has related to threading occurs when you reply to your own tweet. If you want to have a sequence of multiple messages that link one to the other, you must reply to the previous one in the chain for Twitter to record the order properly.

I have some interest in knowing which of my tweets people seem to care about, and the Stats panel feeds my pitiful ego. It shows an interaction summary at the top: faves received, number of retweets and a count of new followers.

Attaching images is substantially better in this release than before. With iCloud Photo Library, I have tens of thousands of images loaded in 'optimised' form on my iPhone. A side-scrolling list of thumbnails appears nearly instantly for the most recent images, and you can tap to examine the library more fully or take a picture.

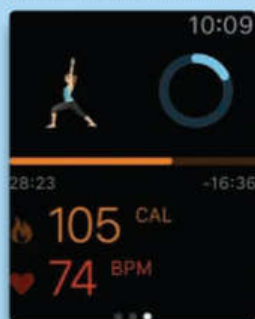
— BY GLENN FLEISHMAN



**POCKET YOGA**

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With Pocket Yoga you can keep up with your practice at your own pace in the comforts of your own home. Simply roll out your mat, place your device in front and Pocket Yoga will guide you through your entire session. There are 27 different sessions of varying duration and difficulty.

**BONZA WORD PUZZLE**

GAMES

Minimega

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Bonza is a new type of crossword that mixes word search, jigsaw and trivia knowledge to create something completely fresh. Each day you'll be able to solve a new free puzzle. Some are based on current events; others are designed by the Bonza community. If you

like a word challenge and enjoy pushing boxes around with your fingers, then you'll enjoy Bonza Word Puzzle.

**QUINT**

LIFESTYLE

Melina Wilkins

iPHONE \$2.49

Quint lets you personalise a contemporary urban designer range of invitations including an RSVP tracker to ensure your event guest list is taken care of. You can also custom design your own artwork, cards, quotes, prints and tram scrolls to send digitally or direct to the printers to print on card and/or canvas.

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TRAVEL

Explore Australia

iPHONE AND iPAD \$14.99

Camping Around Australia lets you choose from over 3000 researched camping areas. Browse campsites near you or use the map view. Whether you want to find dog-friendly campsites in your favourite national park, or the perfect beach camp

with fishing opportunities nearby, Camping Around Australia will deliver.

**FIFA 16 ULTIMATE TEAM**

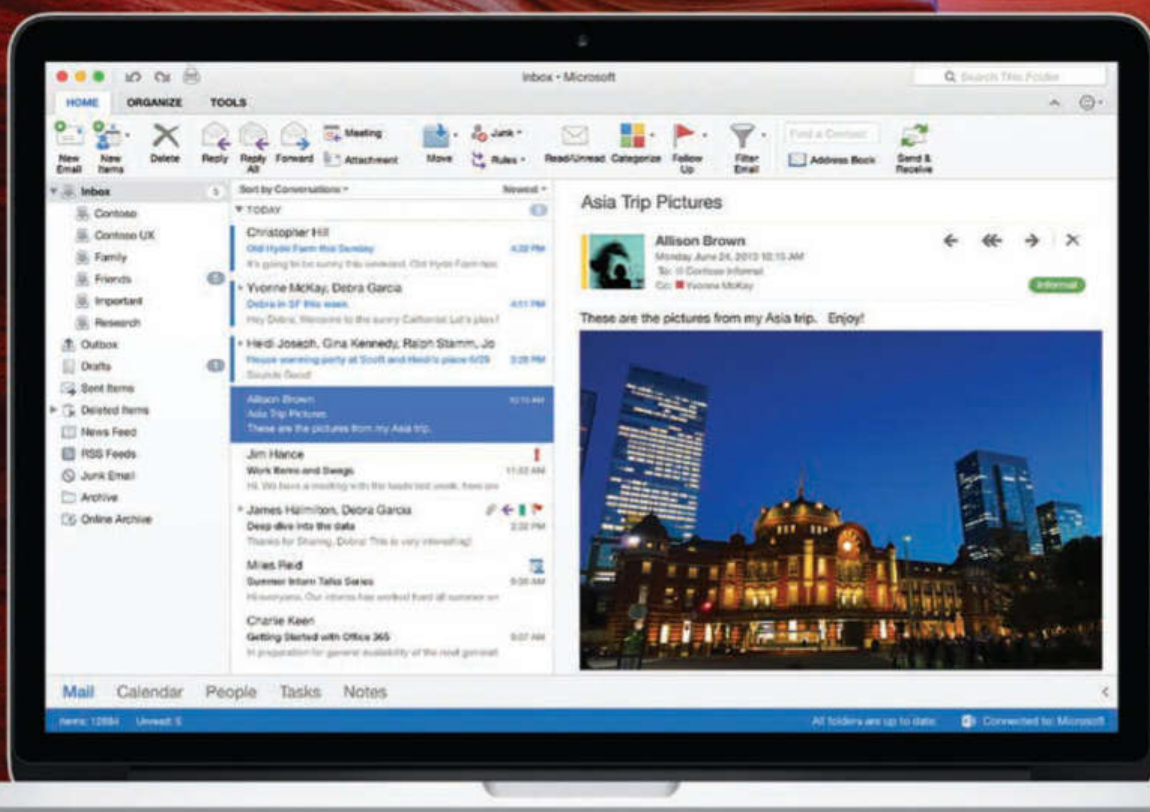
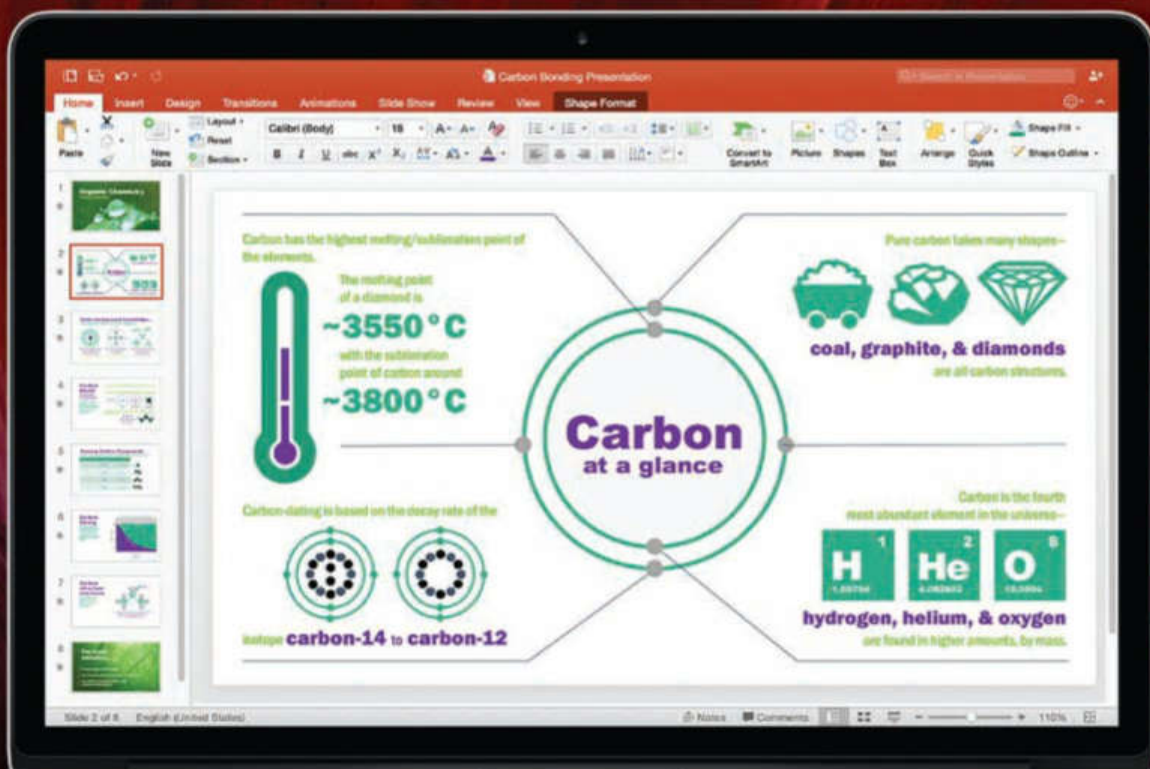
GAMES

Electronic Arts

iPAD AND iPHONE FREE (IN-APP PURCHASES)

FIFA brings the beautiful game to iOS Play with console-like graphics, letting you experience the most realistic set of football features on the App Store. FIFA 16 Ultimate Team uses Enhanced Hybrid Controls that let you use gestures or buttons to control the ball. Gain improved offside awareness and more with Attacking Intelligence, and then blow past the defence with ease. You can also simulate matches, taking the manager position on the side of the pitch. You can trigger unique player celebrations on the pitch after you score. Just like the big league, you can earn, trade and transfer superstars like Lionel Messi, Jordan Henderson and Juan Cuadrado to create your own fantasy team. There are over 10,000 players from over 500 licensed teams to pick from.

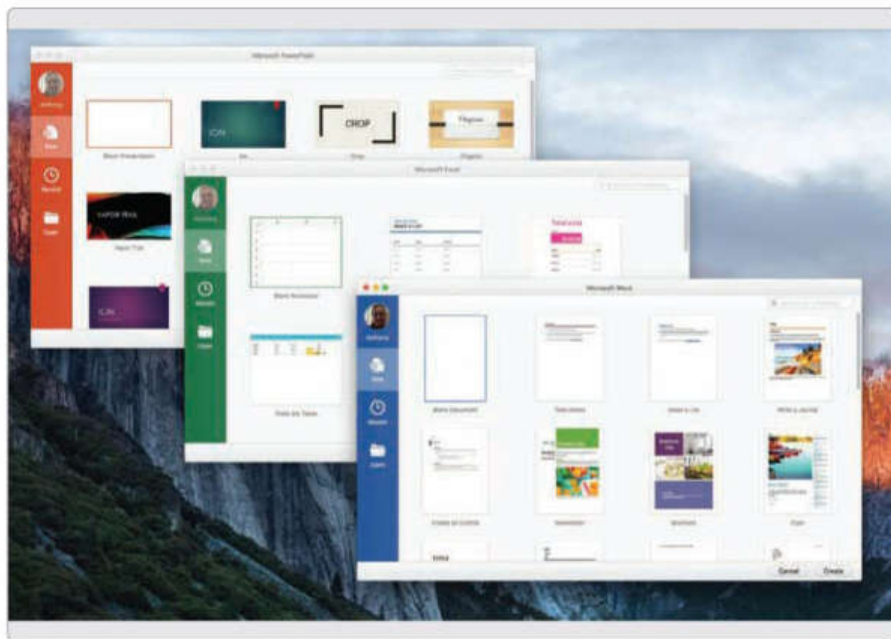






TWENTY TIMESAVING TIPS FOR **OFFICE 2016** FOR MAC

BY RAY AGUILERA



Office 2016 apps into full-screen mode by clicking the green full-screen button in the upper left corner of any window.

4. SHARE DOCUMENTS WITH A CLICK

Office 2016 has made sharing your documents super easy – just click the silhouette icon in the upper right corner of the window. From the pop-up sharing menu, you can invite people to collaborate, copy a public link or send the document as an email attachment. If the file is stored locally on your Mac, you'll need to move it to the cloud first in order to invite people or copy a public link, which only takes two clicks.

5. JUMP AROUND WITH DOCUMENT NAVIGATION

Use the Navigation pane to easily move around complex documents. To view the Navigation pane, go to View Sidebar Navigation. Click on an item in the list to jump directly to that section of your document. The Navigation pane also tracks your location in the document as you edit, highlighting the section on which you're currently working.

6. TWEAK STYLES QUICKLY

Apply and create styles quickly with the new Styles Pane. From the Home tab, click the Styles Pane on the far right. Apply a style by clicking its name in the list, or use the New Style button to create a brand new style from scratch. If you have a document with many applied styles, check the Show Styles Guides box to toggle on a colour-coded guide to all the styles that have been applied to your document.

7. SAVE TIME WITH AUTOCORRECT

Speed up your writing with AutoCorrect. If you frequently misspell the same words over and over again, add them

Productivity? Sweet! Office 2016 for Mac was a long time coming, but it brings plenty of new features and better feature parity with the Windows version than ever. Microsoft has done a lot to streamline the experience, with a customisable, collapsible Ribbon as well as cross-platform keyboard shortcuts, but with any major Office update, there's bound to be a learning curve. These tips for Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook and OneNote should come in handy.

Office 2016 is available for Office365 subscribers, and had a wider release in September.

1. DON'T FORGET TO SAVE!

This is probably our most important tip: don't forget to save! When Apple introduced Auto Save and Versions into OS X, many Mac users started losing our ingrained habit of hitting Command-S often. Unfortunately, Office 2016 (except for OneNote – more on that in a bit) doesn't take advantage of Auto Save. So don't forget to save often. Versioning is also missing, but, on the plus side, fans of Save As will find the command in its rightful place in the File menu.

2. STORE YOUR FILES IN ONEDRIVE OR SHAREPOINT

If you need access to your files from anywhere, Office 2016's built-in OneDrive and SharePoint integration makes cloud storage simple.

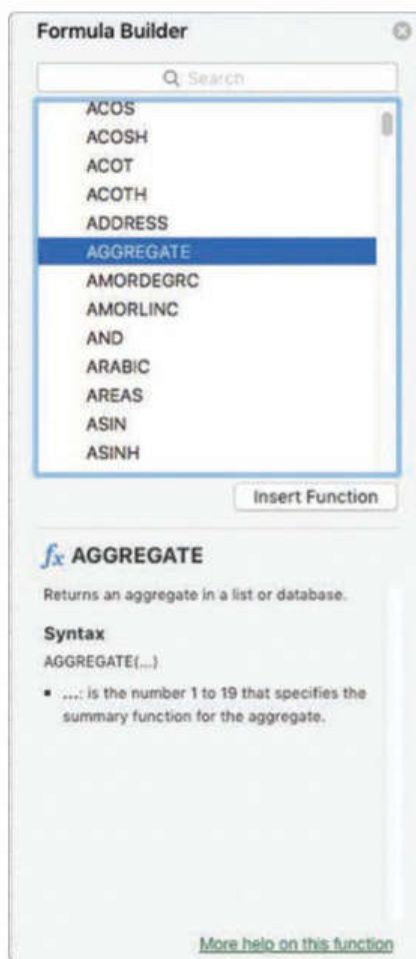
To save to your OneDrive or SharePoint account, click the Online Locations button in the lower left corner of a Save dialogue box. Choose your existing account from the list, or click the + button to add another location.

What's the difference? Glad you asked. OneDrive is a consumer product for cloud storage, like iCloud Drive. Aimed more at businesses, SharePoint acts like an intranet, letting teams share and collaborate on files.

3. MAXIMISE YOUR WORKSPACE

The redesigned Ribbon in Office 2016 unifies the look and functionality across all platforms. It also takes up a lot of space, and can be pretty cluttered. If you need some extra screen real estate, hide the Ribbon by clicking on the small arrow on the far right side. Click the arrow to display the Ribbon again. You can also show or hide the Ribbon by clicking on the currently active tab. Of course, you can put





to your AutoCorrect dictionary. Choose Tools AutoCorrect, and add entries to automatically fix your terrible typing habits. You can also add to your AutoCorrect dictionary from Word's automatic spellcheck. Control-Click a misspelled word, and use the contextual menu to add its replacement to AutoCorrect.

8. USE UNIVERSAL EXCEL SHORTCUTS

If you work on both Macs and Windows computers, you know how frustrating keyboard shortcuts can be. Now, you can use (most of) the same Excel shortcuts on your Mac as you do on a PC. Mac-centric Command-key shortcuts still work (and show up in menus), but Windows shortcuts you already know will also work in Excel. There are a few exceptions, so check Microsoft's handy cheat sheet.

9. PRINT TO PDF FROM EXCEL

Excel hasn't always played nicely with your Mac's PDF functions. Thankfully in Excel 2016, the problem has been solved. In the Print dialogue, select Save As PDF in the PDF drop-down menu, and Excel will create a single PDF file from your Excel spreadsheet.

10. USE FORMULA BUILDER

Spreadsheets are great for crunching data, but writing just the right formula can be a process of trial and error. Formula Builder is a boon for users who aren't up to speed on Excel's syntax. Shift-F3 summons the new Formula Builder, giving you point-and-click access to even the most complex Excel formulas.

11. PERFECT YOUR PRESENTATION WITH PRESENTER VIEW

Your presentations will be flawless with PowerPoint's new Presenter view. From here, you can see the current slide, next slide and a scrollable thumbnail view of your entire PowerPoint deck. Clock and timer functions will keep you on pace, and your notes for each slide are easily readable, so you won't miss any important points along the way.

12. BETTER POWERPOINT ANIMATIONS

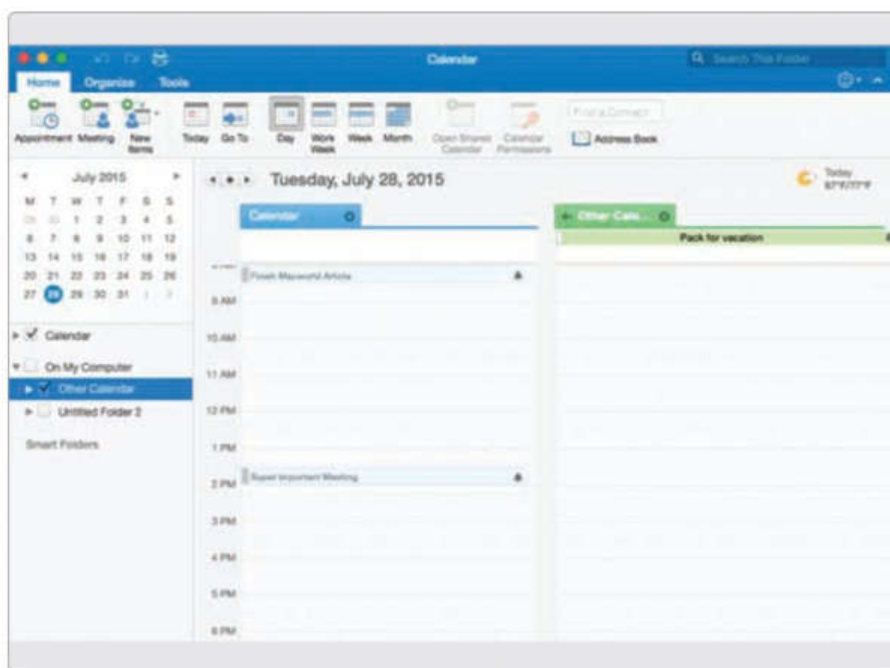
Now you can fine-tune animations from the new Animations Pane. It offers easy access to sounds, timing and other animation parameters to get just the effect you're looking for, all in one place.

13. CROSS-PLATFORM TRANSITIONS

After spending hours getting your latest presentation just right, you test it on your Mac and find out that some of the transitions aren't available, leading to unwanted results. Thankfully, that problem is finally solved. Microsoft has added new transitions to PowerPoint 2016 for Mac, bringing it in line with the Windows version. Hooray for cross-platform compatibility.

14. WEATHER INFO IN OUTLOOK

Outlook can display daily weather information at the top of your calendar. Click on the forecast to pop out a larger view, with additional information, and a link that takes you directly to msn.com's forecast page, with additional local weather information for your location. If you'd rather be surprised when you step outside, simply uncheck a box in Preferences.



15. SCHEDULE WITH SIDE-BY-SIDE CALENDARS...

If you're juggling multiple calendars, Outlook 2016's new side-by-side option is great for spotting conflicts. To display multiple calendars side-by-side, simply select them using the checkbox in the Navigation pane. Outlook will then use your current view to display multiple calendars in adjacent tabs. Uncheck them to close, or use the X button on a calendar's tab to hide it again.

16. ...OR OVERLAY MULTIPLE CALENDARS

Of course, sometimes you need to see everything at once. With multiple calendars displayed, click the Overlay button in the Organize tab to consolidate multiple calendars into a single view. Clicking the Overlay button again will toggle your selected calendars back into side-by-side mode.

17. USE THREADED CONVERSATIONS IN OUTLOOK

Conversations view is improved in Outlook 2016. Your incoming mail will automatically be sorted into threaded groups, and you can act on entire threads, or individual messages. Click the disclosure triangle to display individual messages in a thread, or turn Conversations off by clicking View Arrange Conversations.

18. FIND WHAT YOU NEED WITH FILTERS


Outlook offers some excellent tools to quickly drill down to just the messages that matter right now. From Outlook's Home tab, the Filter button quickly displays only certain messages, such as mail received today, this week or this month. You can also filter for messages with attachments, unread emails and several others. One of our favourite features is the ability to filter by category. It requires a bit of work – you'll need to split senders into relevant groups, but, once you do, you can separate out messages from your boss, family or whatever other group you need at the touch of a button.

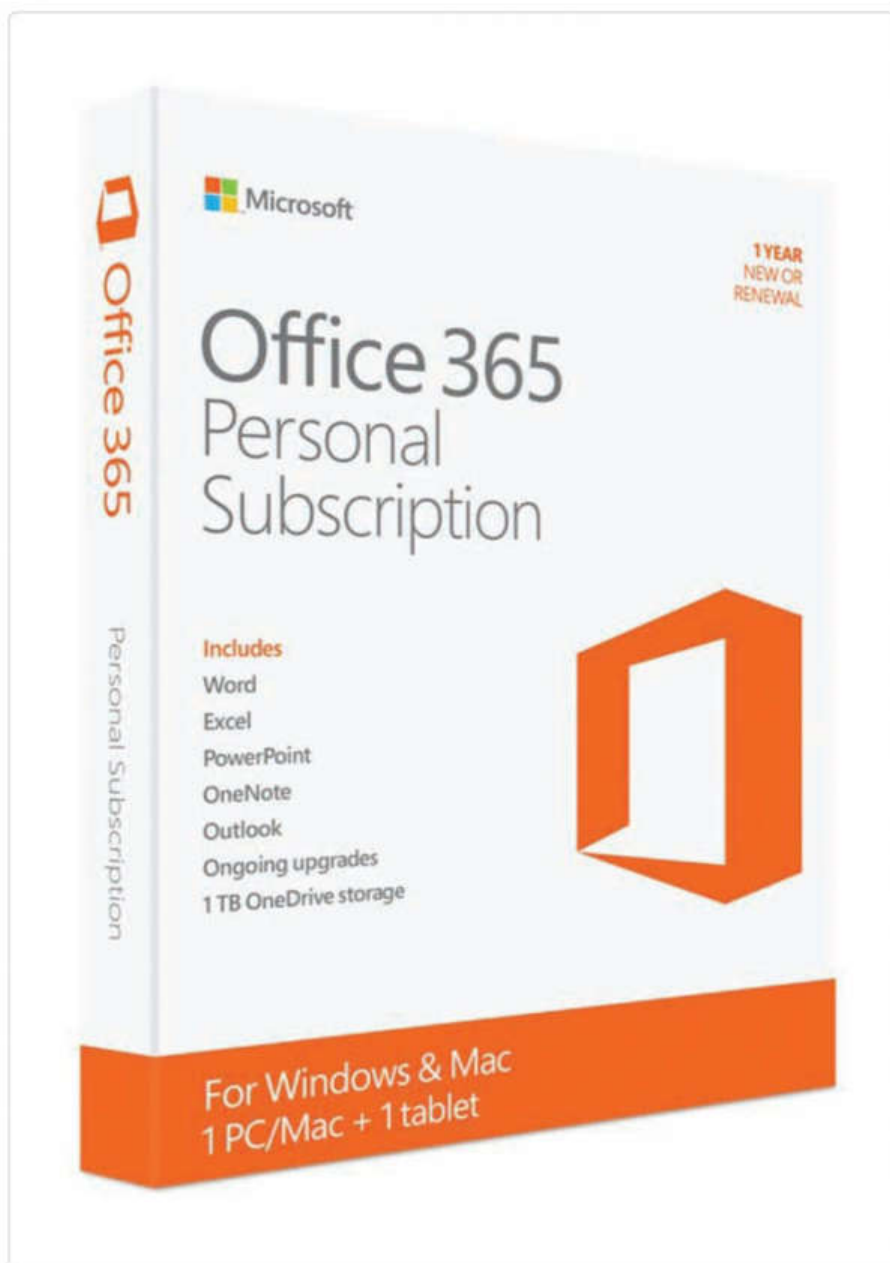
19. PASSWORD-PROTECT YOUR NOTES

OneNote is great for collecting and organising all sorts of information. But some things are better kept away from prying eyes (especially since OneNote syncs across all your devices). To keep your private information out of the wrong hands, use OneNote's built-in password protection. To lock down a section of your notebook, choose *Notebooks > Sections > Password > Protection > Protect This*

Section. Enter a password, and keep the bad guys out of your stuff.

20. ONENOTE SYNC

Unlike the rest of Office 2016, OneNote saves your data automatically, syncing it via your Microsoft account. This enables you to access your OneNote data across multiple Macs, PCs or handheld devices. To check when your OneNote notebooks were last synced, click the notebook's name, and then the arrow to the right of the name. 



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INSTALLING EL CAPITAN

BY ANTHONY CARUANA





El Capitan is here. As new versions of OS X go, Apple hasn't made a really big deal about the 12th version of its personal computer operating system. It didn't even rate a mention at the recent event that saw the new iPhone, Apple TV and iPad Pro announced – it was relegated to a footnote.

This says a lot about the new Apple – the one that dropped the word 'computer' from its name a few years ago and is no longer simply the consumer electronics juggernaut that has redefined the very meaning of personal computing.

At first glance, OS X 10.11 seems to have changed very little since the release of Yosemite just over a year ago. But, once you look a little more closely, you'll notice dozens of changes. A new system typeface, called San Francisco, has been deployed system-wide. This is the same typeface created for the Apple Watch. And, the dreaded beachball – the spinning circle that appears when your Mac is particularly busy – has been subtly refined as well.

We've installed El Capitan on two Macs – a 2013 MacBook Pro 13in and a current Mac mini. With the MacBook Pro, we took the default option of upgrading an existing installation. The

Mac mini was in for a special treat – it has received a clean installation with the previous system wiped.

PREPARING AN INSTALLATION USB

If you have more than one Mac, it's worth downloading El Capitan once from the App Store and then preparing a USB stick.

The process is quite easy, as Apple has included a new Terminal command, called `createinstallmedia`, to make the process easy. You'll need an 8GB or bigger USB stick for this.

- Download the El Capitan installer from the App Store. Once it finishes downloading, it will automatically launch. Quit the installer at this point as it deletes itself once the installation is finished.
- Plug the USB stick into your Mac. Once it's mounted, an icon for the USB drive will appear on your desktop. Double click on the name of the disk and rename it to `elcapitansetup`. This name is important, as it will be in the Terminal command we use to create the installation media.
- Launch the Terminal. It's in your Application/Utilities folder.

- After Terminal is launched, enter the following command
`sudo /Applications/Install\ OS\ X\ El\ Capitan.app/Contents/Resources/createinstallmedia --volume /Volumes/elcapitansetup --applicationpath /Applications/Install\ OS\ X\ El\ Capitan.app --nointeraction`
- The process will take some time depending on the speed of your Mac and the USB stick. But once it's complete, you'll see the word 'Done' appear on the screen.

UPGRADING WITH THE EL CAPITAN USB

Upgrading the MacBook Pro was a simple process. We simply plugged the El Capitan installed USB we created into the Mac, double clicked the 'Install El Capitan' application icon and the process looked after itself.

After a little over an hour, our MacBook Pro was upgraded.

One of the concerns when upgrading an operating system is that some applications may not work. As with previous versions of OS X, once the installer has finished, it disables applications that are known to not work. For us, this meant we needed to

upgrade a few applications such as iStat Menus and the older version of Parallels we've been running.

PREPARING FOR THE FRESH INSTALLATION

The Mac mini is our workhorse system. We use it as the main work system and media server within our home office. It's also the last link in a chain of system migrations going back several years.

Our usual routine, when we get a new Mac, is to use the Migration Assistant to pick up everything from our previous system. This works well as it means we're up and running in the shortest time possible with all of our applications, data and configuration on the new Mac without the need to do any manual copying and moving.

However, it also means the ghosts of installed applications, unused data and other cruft come along for the ride.

Carrying out a fresh install of El Capitan does take some time and effort. But the result should be worth it with a much cleaner system bereft of years of accumulated junk.

Wiping a hard drive and installing a new operating system from scratch without losing any important data can be a nerve-racking experience. We have a 4TB drive connected to the Mac mini that holds our iTunes library, so that made a good location to store all the other files we wanted to bring across to our new El Capitan system.

We made a list of all the applications we wanted to install on the new system, ensuring we had all the relevant registration keys and other download information recorded. We also copied a number of important folders and files including our iTunes folder, Photos, Movies, virtual machines, OneDrive and Mail.

Although all of the data in OneDrive and Mail could be accessed via the cloud, making a copy that we could manually restore on our new system would save time when we were back up and running.

Just in case, however, we also ensured our Time Machine backup was up-to-date

and we closed the entire drive to another external drive using Super Duper.

INSTALLING A FRESH SYSTEM WITH THE EL CAPITAN USB

In order to boot from the USB drive we created we restarted the Mac mini. As the computer started, we held down the Option key. This presented us with a menu where we could choose to either boot from the existing system or from the El Capitan USB installer we created.

Using the arrow keys on the keyboard, we chose the USB and followed the prompts.

At the point where we were asked for the installation location for El Capitan, we launched the newly redesigned Disk Utility from the Utilities menu at the top of the screen. We chose the local hard drive, usually called Macintosh HD, and erased it.

We then followed the prompts, allowing the installer to do its thing while we relaxed.

Once the installer completed, it was time to copy all of our data back and reinstall our applications. Fortunately, most of our apps come from the App Store, so a quick trip to the Purchased section of the store made it easy to reinstall those apps. As we're Office 365 and Adobe Creative Cloud subscribers, downloading those applications required a trip to their

respective websites. Aside from these, there were just a handful of other apps we needed to download manually from specific websites.

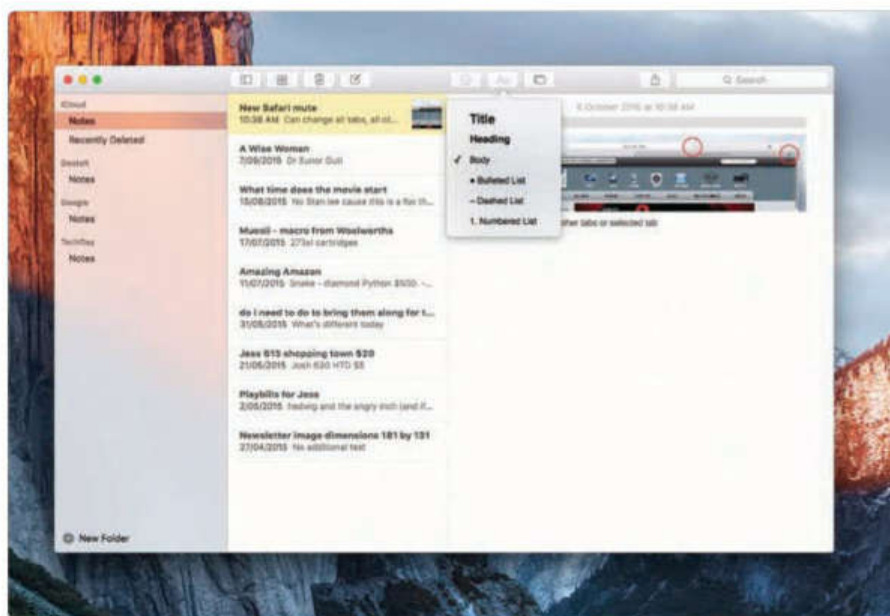
WHAT'S CHANGED?

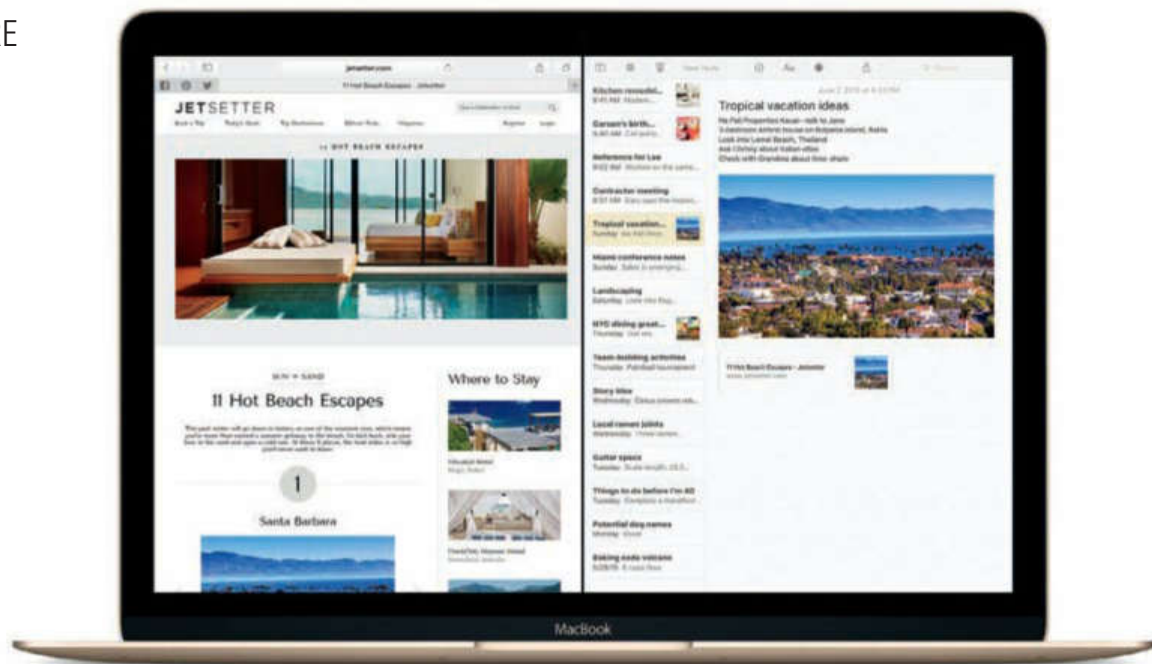
When a new operating system is released, it's always compared to its predecessor. At a cursory glance, El Capitan is only subtly different to Yosemite. That's in keeping with Apple's strategy of smaller, incremental annual updates rather than monolithic changes every couple of years.

Aside from the system font and redesigned beachball, there are lots of small tweaks. For example, Disk Utility has been completely redesigned and the old Verify Permissions and Repair Permissions options are gone.

Spotlight has been given a onceover. The Spotlight window can now be moved, rather than being locked to the centre of the screen, and it responds to natural language queries like 'what's the weather in Sydney?'. Clearly, Apple is looking closely at Google's hold on search and is launching a quiet incursion by integrating search deeply into its operating system. We suspect it won't be long until most Mac users will be using Spotlight for all their searches, both local and online.

The Notes application has been given a huge makeover. We're big fans of Evernote,





but recent company difficulties have us wondering whether it is a safe long-term bet. Although we'll stick with Evernote for the time being, Notes' ability to capture all sorts of information makes it look like an entry-level word processing or desktop publishing app. The ability to easily sync notes via iCloud between iOS and OS X devices makes it a compelling new app.

You'd think that after close to two decades web browsers would have reached a level of maturity where there would be very little to change. Yet the evolving nature of the web has forced Apple, Microsoft, Google, Firefox and others to constantly refine and improve their browser software.

Safari looks and feels very much like the version shipped and updated with Yosemite, but there is one feature we really love – the ability to mute the volume on a browser tab. One of our pet hates is audio and video that automatically plays when we open a page. When video starts playing with the new version of Safari, a small icon appears on the browser tab. Click on the icon and the volume is automatically muted, allowing you to either work in silence or continue to listen to your tunes without interruption.

There was a time when Apple's desktop operating system led the rollout of features with iOS following along. But those days are behind us with the tail well and truly wagging the dog. Mail now uses the swipe features that were introduced in iOS 8.

Mission Control, Apple's system for managing multiple desktops and open applications has also been refined.

However, there are a few little things we don't like. For example, with Yosemite, swiping up on our trackpad with four fingers showed all the multiple desktops as well as what was open on each desktop. With El Capitan, all we see is a list of the desktops. To see an image of each desktop we need to move the mouse over the list.

It's not a big deal but it's one more movement with the trackpad – and it's one more move we make dozens of times each day.

The refinement to Full Screen mode is welcome. Our Mac mini is connected to a 27in Cinema Display, which makes full screen slightly wasteful when all that's on show is Mail. But being able to have Safari and Word open side by side with no other distractions is very handy.

Once you spend a few hours with Apple's latest landmark release you'll find many more changes large and small.

PERFORMANCE

One of the benefits of making small changes is that Apple can focus on performance and reliability, as well as adding new features. When product releases were every two or three years, there was a focus on adding lots of new features. The incremental change approach allows Apple to, at least in theory, deliver functional changes as well as optimisations.

According to Apple, any system that can run Snow Leopard – this means Macs that were released as far back as 2007 – can run El Capitan. If your Mac is running

a 64-bit processor, then it can most likely run El Capitan. However, being *able to* install and run El Capitan doesn't mean you should.


We'd strongly recommend that your system has 8GB of system memory. Although El Capitan will run with less RAM, we're not convinced it will be a great experience. And the performance difference between a system running with an SSD and one with a spinning hard drive is stunning. Our MacBook Pro is far faster than the Mac mini, despite having a slower CPU.

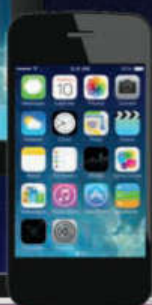
Our experience is El Capitan feels faster than Yosemite. On the MacBook Pro, most actions are snappier. Even with several applications open at the same time, everything feels responsive and we rarely see the beachball.

Our Mac mini is also running faster although how much of that is due to El Capitan alone and how much is because we're running a clean installation is open for debate.

SHOULD YOU UPGRADE?

There are two types of people: those who instantly upgrade whenever a new operating system is released and those who say they'll wait until the first or second maintenance release.

El Capitan is a solid upgrade for most Mac users. Whether you're an early adopter or more cautious, check that your apps will all work before upgrading, make a backup before you upgrade and ensure that your hardware is up to the task. 



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How to use the Retouch tool in Photos for Mac

BY LESA SNIDER

There's nothing wrong with a little vanity. After all, sometimes a perfectly good portrait is marred by small yet annoying stuff like a zit, make-up smudge or stray hairs. Or maybe you captured an object in the frame you wish you hadn't. Happily, the Retouch tool in Photos for OS X can come to your rescue (it's not available in Photos for iOS). As you're about to learn, Photos' Retouch tool is more powerful than the one in iPhoto.

HOW TO USE THE RETOUCH TOOL

The Retouch tool works by copying pixels from one area of your photo to another and then blending them (blurring, really) into the pixels you click or drag atop. To use it, select an image in Photos and then press Return to enter Edit mode, or press the Edit button in the upper right of the toolbar. Use the Zoom slider at the upper left to zoom into the image and, if necessary, drag while holding down the spacebar to reposition the image, so you can see the thing you're about to remove.

Activate the Retouch tool by clicking it or by pressing the R key on your keyboard. When you do, your cursor turns into a black circular outline rimmed with white, so you can always see the circle atop dark or light colours in your image. Adjust the brush cursor size so it's slightly larger than the item you want to remove. Use the Size slider at the right or your keyboard: tap [(the left bracket key) to make the cursor smaller, or tap] (the right bracket key) to make it bigger. Next, choose from one of the following two methods to send the offending item packing.

COPY PIXELS FROM JUST OUTSIDE THE CURSOR'S EDGE

If you've got plenty of good, clean pixels around the thing you want to get rid of – say, flawless skin around a blemish or a cloudless sky around a sensor spot – then single click this. You will briefly see a white overlay marking the area you clicked, and when you release your mouse button,

Photos blends the copied pixels into the surrounding ones. If the item fits easily inside your cursor, a single click is all it takes to zap it.

If the item has plenty of free pixels around it, but it doesn't fit within a round brush cursor – think stray hairs, power lines, a scar and so on – click and drag with the tool instead. When you do, Photos shows your brushstroke as a white overlay. Release your mouse button, and Photos copies nearby pixels and blends them into the area you dragged over.

Keep your eyes peeled for any smudging that occurs from the pixel blending Photos performs. If necessary, press Command-Z to undo the last brushstroke you made and have another go at it, perhaps with a smaller brush or by repositioning the item within the brush cursor or by clicking instead of dragging (or vice versa). To undo all the changes you've made with the Retouch tool in the current editing session, click the Reset button at the lower right.

COPY PIXELS FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE PHOTO

If you don't have good pixels (or enough of them) around the item you want to remove, you can copy pixels from elsewhere in the image by setting a sample point (iPhoto can't do this). This manoeuvre is handy for removing stuff that's close to items you want to keep. To do it, Option-click the area you want to copy the pixels from – your cursor turns into a plus sign like the one circled in the photo on the next page. Next, release the Option key, and then click or drag over the area that needs fixing.


As you work, the plus sign marks the area Photos is copying pixels from, and you see a white overlay marking your brushstrokes.

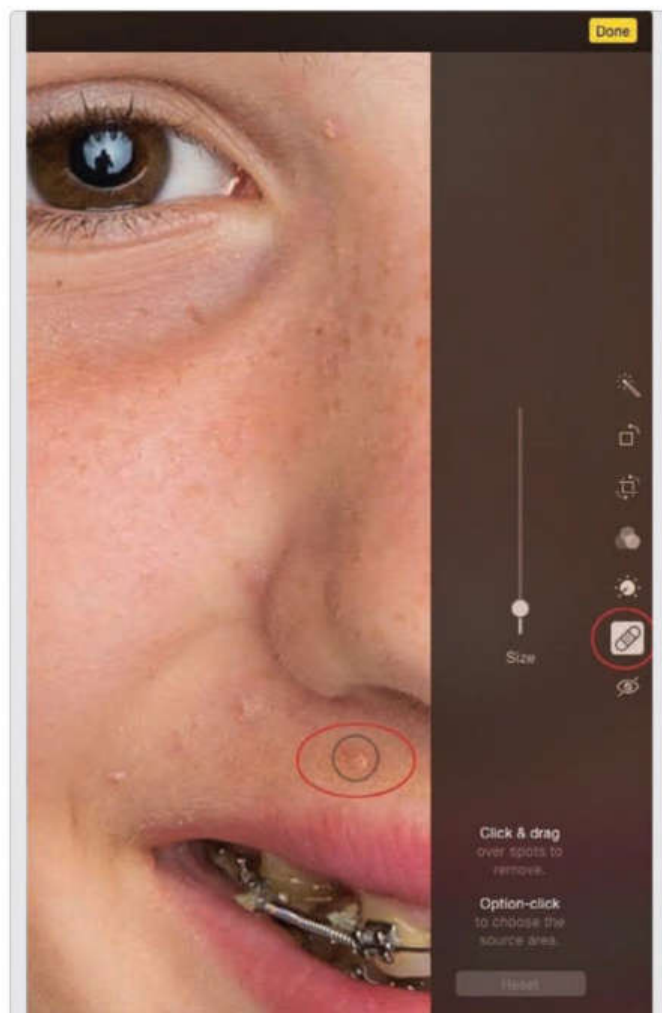
Depending on the size of the area you're fixing, you may need to set several sample points to make colour and texture match better.

In the example on the previous page, I set a sample point above the dog bowl and made two rows of brush strokes before releasing the mouse button. Then I set another sample point beneath the bowl, and made two more rows of brush strokes. Finally, I set a third sample point in the light-coloured area at the upper left and made a few brushstrokes across the area where the bowl used to be to lighten it.

Be aware that after setting a sample point, Photos will use that point for subsequent fixes you make with the Retouch tool in that editing

session. To return to using pixels outside your brush cursor, toggle the Retouch tool off and on by tapping the R key on your keyboard twice (once to turn it off and again to turn it back on). Alternatively, click the tool's icon once to deactivate it and then click the icon again to reactivate.

No matter which of the above methods you use, it's important not to go overboard with the Retouch tool – if you use it extensively in an area with detail, the area blurs as if someone has smeared Vaseline on it (heck, the same is true when using the Spot or Healing Brush in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements). Nevertheless, Photos' Retouch tool is remarkably powerful, especially for removing small stuff. 



YOU CAN ASK THE **MACWORLD AUSTRALIA** TEAM ANY MAC- OR APPLE-RELATED QUESTIONS BY EMAILING EDITOR@MACWORLD.COM.AU. ANSWERS THIS MONTH BY GLENN FLEISHMAN.

STM READER TIP

Autocorrecting names

If you find that autocorrect tries to correct people's names wrongly for you, then add their name as a contact. The contact need only contain the person's first name and doesn't need anything else.

After doing this on my iPhone I no longer have issues with my daughter's name being constantly marked as misspelled or corrected to the wrong word.

Jamie Dobbs

This is a really handy tip. While autocorrect does a reasonable job at fixing many typos, some of its mangling of names is pretty incredible. Thanks for this, Jamie.

EACH MONTH, STM gives a prize to the *Macworld Australia* reader who submits the best and most useful tip (undocumented tips preferred). This month's prize is a comfortable and portable STM sequel small laptop shoulder bag worth \$99.95.

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www.stmbags.com.au

? DISABLING FACETIME RINGING

My experience is that if I don't immediately pick up and answer on the iPhone, the Mac will continue ringing a time or two after I start talking on the phone. Annoying.

Ron Phelps

I've noticed the same problem, and it is annoying! However, there's no current option (nor none planned in OS X 10.11 El Capitan at this writing) that would let you disable incoming calls or even turn off FaceTime's ringer while also allowing call Handoff. The ringer situation seems a little ridiculous: why not have a mute-ring-tone checkbox in the FaceTime app?

? UNWANTED RINGING ON MULTIPLE PHONES

I notice when I get a call to my personal phone, my business phone gets a forwarded call, and vice versa. I have tried to disable call forwarding, but no luck.

Neil Widmer

This is another all-or-nothing situation. In *Settings > FaceTime*, if you have iPhone Cellular Calls enabled on an iOS device, any incoming call on





one iPhone will also ring on that iOS device. The feature was designed to allow an iPad or iPod touch to be used with phone calls, but it also works with iPhones.

Conceivably, you could pick one phone and disable that feature, unless you're enjoying having phone calls forward to OS X and iOS from both phones. Or you could create a second iCloud account and use that with one phone.

? DISCONTINUITY

I have a mid-2011 iMac and an iPhone 5, both running the latest OS. I cannot get the phone function to work on the iMac. I get an error that says the devices have to be on the same iCloud and Wi-Fi network. They are. I have disconnected the Ethernet cable between my computer and AirPort. I have restarted both devices. I have phone calls via Wi-Fi enabled. All the instructions have been followed and it doesn't work.

Michael Mackowski

The first problem is that Apple doesn't support Continuity on mid-2011 iMacs, only models released starting in late 2012. There are third-party patches that let you enable Continuity, but these can be inconsistent, as the feature relies in part on Bluetooth hardware and features that are only present in the supported models. (I tried this on a 2011-era MacBook Air and Mac mini with mixed results before upgrading computers.)

Even with supported models, however, I still see a huge amount of variation in Continuity's consistency. The Instant Hotspot feature should work all the time, for instance, and yet my iPhone rarely appears on either of my 2014/2015 model-year Macs.

Having Ethernet plugged in doesn't disable Continuity, but the iOS device and OS X device must have Bluetooth enabled for many features and thus be within Bluetooth range. Phone calls only require Wi-Fi, and should thus work even with older Macs that have been patched, but there's clearly no promise there.



? HOW TO GET A NEW FINDER WINDOW THE SIZE YOU WANT

Most of the time the Finder window opens up very small and I have to resize it to make it larger, but sometimes it opens how I last closed it. With past OS X operating systems, it opened how it was left, which is rather large. Is there a way to have the window open how it was last closed?

Dexter Rucker

This has baffled me as well, because I've seen inconsistent behaviour, and I



did some exploring. In my experience, I can't resize a window and then get the next opened window to work the same way. I checked through forums for the wisdom of crowds, and many people suggested deleting a variety of preference or Finder-configuration files. While that's not a terrible thing to do, it also seems extreme.

In Yosemite, I tested one suggestion after I was unable to set a window's default opening behaviour. I created a model window, closed it and then closed all windows (Command-Option-W, Option-close button, or hold down Option while selecting File and choose Close All Windows). Then I held down Option and right-clicked the Finder icon in the Dock and selected Relaunch.

Voila! After that point, whenever I resized a Finder window, all subsequent windows would open in the same dimensions, offset slightly in location, including the width of the sidebar. I tried this in the current public El Capitan beta, but had zero luck. Perhaps it will be fixed by release.

What's odd about this solution is that I had just restarted the Mac a few hours before. Relaunching the Finder may clear files that persist across OS X's restart.

? SAFARI CONSISTENTLY QUILTS IN YOSEMITE

■ **After leaving my computer for a period of time, I come back and Safari has closed down. No error or crash report. It's as if someone**

is playing a trick on me and closes Safari. I have tried rebooting, deleting preference files and turning off sleep. Not allowing my computer to sleep seems to have reduced the frequency that it happens, but I can't be sure of it.

Andrew Chase

In 10.7 Lion, Apple added an automatic background quit feature to OS X that's designed to better free up system resources by software that's not in use. It comes in two forms: automatic termination, which silently goes through the app's normal quitting process when you're not using it, and sudden termination, which kills off the app without any warning.



Both features require developers to add support, and Apple incorporated termination into many of its apps as an example to others. I notice that QuickTime Player, which I use to record audio from a mic, will sometimes quit almost immediately after I launch it if I navigate to another app before opening a new audio recording window! That's probably a bit aggressive.


However, this automatic quitting is supposed to be paired with faster start-up, so that, from the standpoint of the user, they're not waiting for the app to launch again, but rather it seems a very brief pause before it's available.

I suspect this is what's happening with you and Safari, though it's clearly

more aggressive than you want. I would also suspect that you typically have many apps running or not enough memory available for the apps you routinely use. OS X is quitting Safari whenever it has the opportunity to avoid using disk-based memory swapping, which slows down the system.

If you dare use the command line via Terminal, you can disable this behaviour system wide. Enter exactly the following, all on one line:

```
defaults write -g  
NSDisableAutomaticTermination -bool  
yes
```

Apps with the feature need to be quit and relaunched. Swap yes for no if you want to re-enable this feature later. 






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Premium sound

By Kirk McElhearn and Anthony Caruana.

Sennheiser Urbanite XL

This \$200 Sennheiser Urbanite headphone emulates the big, bulky, Beats aesthetic. As Sennheiser says, it has "massive bass", but that bass compromises clarity. Aside from the booming bass, there's poor definition across the spectrum. When we set my iPhone's EQ to Bass Reducer, much of the music we listened to sounded tinny and distorted. This isn't a fault of the EQ; using the same setting with other headphones didn't result in poor sound.

It's the heaviest of the headphones we tried, at 205g, and it feels bulky on the head. There's no case, only a cloth carrying bag, but it has a removable flat cable, which is less likely to tangle, and the cable has an inline remote with control buttons and a microphone.

When stored away, the Urbanite headphones fold with the earcups folding in to the headband. We're always a little suspicious of moving parts on devices such as headphones, which are often thrown in and out of luggage. However, the hinge seemed robust although we wouldn't make a habit of storing a bunch of gear on top of them in our airline carry-on.

It's worth noting that, even at this premium price, the Urbanite headphones don't offer active noise cancellation. The plush padding around the earcup does a good job of blocking out ambient noise but, at this price, we'd be expecting active noise cancellation.

But the sound of this headphone was poor enough that we wouldn't recommend it, though if you listen to a lot of bass-heavy music, you may want to try it out.

— KIRK MCELHEARN
AND ANTHONY
CARUANA



\$399 / SENNHEISER
www.sennheiser.com

PROS Comfort

CONS No active noise cancellation; sound quality

V-Moda XS

We reviewed the US\$200 V-Moda headphones last year, and our reviewer loved it. I found the V-Moda XS to be light and comfortable, within limits. Like all on-ear headphones, warm weather is problematic, as your ears feel uncomfortable pretty quickly. But this tight fit also provides noise isolation. While the earcups are fairly small, they cover my admittedly large ears quite well. So if you're listening to music while walking around the city, a lot of the background sounds get muffled.

The V-Moda XS is fairly light at 172g and folds up quite small, fitting into an easily portable protective case. It has a single, removable cable, reinforced with Kevlar, but I found this cable to be stiff and hard to manage.

Soundwise, the headphone puts both the Beats Solo 2 and the Sennheiser Urbanite to shame. It has a clear, neutral sound, though it's a bit undefined in the high end. It can pack a punch if you want bass, but the bass doesn't overwhelm the midrange and treble.

The only thing I didn't like was the style. The box says, 'built like a tank' and it certainly looks like one too. It's rugged, and will last a long time, so it's a good headphone to have if you don't plan to treat it well.

The main problem I found is the inline microphone and remote button. While the microphone is well placed there's only one button. Most headphones have three buttons, one to pause and play, and two others to change the volume; this remote doesn't have volume buttons, so I needed to go to my iPhone to change volume.

— KIRK MCELHEARN



US\$150 / V-MODA
www.v-moda.com

PROS Comfortable; clear sound

CONS Inline controls limited



OUTSTANDING



VERY GOOD



GOOD



FLAWED



UNACCEPTABLE

61

NOVEMBER 2015
www.macworld.com.au

Beyerdynamic T 51-i

This headphone from Beyerdynamic costs significantly more than the other headphones I tested, but if you want good sound, the difference is certainly worth it. It has a full, powerful sound, with clarity across the spectrum. Midranges are full and vibrant, and trebles are sharp and incisive. There can be a tad too much bass for certain types of music, but the iPhone's Bass Reducer EQ tempers this perfectly.

It's small, light, and comfortable, and, at 157g, the lightest of the three models I tested. It feels a bit tight on my head, but over time it would probably be more comfortable. It has good noise isolation, even though the earcups are quite small. Unlike the V-Moda's oval earcups, the Beyerdynamic's are round, and this seems to give a bit more space to the sound.

This headphone has a dual cable; in other words, it connects to both earpieces. I'd rather have a single cable, because it's less tangle-prone, but a dual cable means that if you jerk the cable, the stress is equally distributed. The cable is not removable, however, which makes me wonder how long it will hold up over time. The inline microphone and remote is placed at nearly the perfect position, and it does have volume buttons.

Aesthetically, I find this headphone to be the nicest of those I tested, but I understand that my taste is not universal. It doesn't have the aggressive styling or bright, shiny colours of Beats headphones, and the solid aluminium armature looks sleek and modern. The build quality makes me think that this is a headphone that's going to last, even with tough usage. (Compare that to Beats' plastic.) It comes with a case, which is a bit large, but very sturdy.

– KIRK
MCELHEARN



\$399 / BEYERDYNAMIC

www.asia-pacific-india.beyerdynamic.com

PROS Comfortable; clear sound

CONS No active noise cancellation

Bose QC20

Noise cancelling headphones don't have to be huge and bulky to properly block sound out. The Bose QC20 buds tick most of the boxes for a set of ear buds for travellers and those looking for a compact yet high quality listening device. The silicone earpieces fit well in my ears. Unlike most buds, the unusual moulding, which Bose calls its StayHear+ tips, looks like something from a sci-fi prop room. However, they formed a tight seal with my ear canal and didn't fall out while I was walking around.

The active noise cancelling electronics are housed in a rectangular module that is about 2cm from the end of the 3.5mm headphone jack. That's where the power switch is found, as well as an LED to indicate the charging status and battery level and another to let you know the headphones are properly connected.

An inline control houses a volume control, as well as a central button that works as a play/pause control or answer/hang-up button. There's also another button that disables the active noise cancelling capability – a handy feature if battery life is limited.

The sound quality was excellent. I tested the QC20s in a number of different situations. Bose hasn't tuned the QC20s to deliver excessive bass. While sitting on an aeroplane, where the ambient noise of the engines can be a real hindrance to enjoying music or movies, the active noise cancelling was very effective. The steady hum of the engines was all but removed. I found I could use the headphones, even disconnected from a music or movie source, just to dull the sound so I could rest.

At almost \$400, the Bose QC20 headphones are priced at a premium. But if you like buds, then the QC20s will fit the bill for a set of noise-cancelling headphones.

– ANTHONY CARUANA



\$399 / BOSE

www.bose.com

PROS Comfort, sound quality

CONS A little cumbersome



Belkin NetCam HD

Belkin's quest for total home domination is in full flight. As well as automating many appliances and helping you monitor and manage power consumption through the WeMo range of products, it has a hand in security with its two camera products: the NetCam (\$129.95) and NetCam HD. I've been testing the NetCam HD for a few weeks.

Setup required installation of Belkin's free NetCam from the App Store to my iPhone. From there, I connected directly to the NetCam HD over a point-to-point Wi-Fi connection that was used to configure the NetCam HD for my wireless network.

The process worked quite well. It does require you to create an account with Belkin but, once the camera is on your network and has internet access, you can access it when you're not home.

The camera settings support many different installation options. If you plan to roof or wall mount the NetCam HD, you can alter the camera's orientation in the software. You can also change the recording and broadcast resolution between three settings: 320 by 180, 640 by 360 (the default setting) and 1280 by 720.

If you have the WeMo app, you'll find the NetCam HD listed as a device under any smart switches and light

bulbs. However, the integration is limited. When I tapped the NetCam HD item in my WeMo app, it simply launched the NetCam app – there's no integration between the NetCam HD and WeMo. Similarly, there's no way to use the NetCam with IFTTT.

This would be handy. For example, when the camera detects movement it would be useful to be able to turn some lights on, to potentially scare off any would-be thieves.

On the upside, you can have the camera send an email alert if it detects motion. And the WeMo app lets you know if the camera does detect motion.


The image quality is very good. The night vision function, which uses infrared to 'illuminate' dark rooms, makes it easy to see things in a completely dark room. During the day, when the room is well lit, the image quality is very clear. Using the NetCam app you can record video and audio, and snap pictures.

As well as being equipped with a microphone, the NetCam HD has a speaker so you can broadcast to anyone at home or in the office. So, if you've left the kids home alone or there's an intruder, you can let them know you've got an eye on them.

One of the issues with using the NetCam HD as a security device – which I see as one of its main

use-cases – is the lack of easy recording. There is an option for a paid service, called iSecurity+, to capture recorded images and video, at \$9.99 per month or \$99.99 per year. However, I'd like an option to save footage and images to a local device such as a NAS (network attached storage) or the hard drive of a computer on my network.

Out of the box, I set the NetCam HD to send an alert via email when it detected movement. I could then remotely log in to the camera and record directly to my iPhone. That's an imperfect solution, as it relies on remote access to the NetCam HD to work and this may not always be the case.

Bottom line. As a monitoring device, the NetCam HD does a competent job. Video quality is good, but the lack of recording options is a significant issue in my view. 

– ANTHONY CARUANA



BELKIN
www.belkin.com/au

PROS Image quality

CONS WeMo integration not great; no recording of footage

\$175.95



Fitbit Surge

To say the fitness tracker and smartwatch category is getting crowded is something of an understatement. But when an established player such as Fitbit adds a new product to the mix it's worth taking a look. The Fitbit Surge isn't a smartwatch, although it does have some basic smartwatch features. And it's more than a regular fitness tracker, as it does more than simply count steps.

As a keen exerciser, I've been looking forward to putting the Surge through its paces for some time. I've worn it while playing tennis, engaging in various fitness classes, including boxing, Pilates and weight training, as well as on many runs and the occasional bike ride. And while it lacks some of the high-end features found in speciality devices – such as pacing tools so you get regular prompts to keep a constant cadence and oscillation measurement to track how smoothly you run – it offers a broad range of features for recreational and intermediate trainers.

To get the most out of the Surge, you need to use the Fitbit app on your iPhone or iPod touch. You can also use your Mac or PC to set the device up using the supplied wireless USB dongle, although I'd expect most people to use the iOS app. The app can also be used to customise the display.

I've looked at the Fitbit app before, but it's worth noting it continues to get better. I've found the nutrition

tracking to have significantly improved and it continues to deliver relevant information clearly.

The Surge is quite bulky and sits a fair way out on the wrist when worn. It's comfortable, but not as svelte and stylish as the Apple Watch. It lacks interchangeable bands, a colour display and other niceties. As an exercise tool, however, I find it far exceeds the Apple Watch.


While exercising, the Surge is easy to use. For example, to start a run, I simply pressed the button on the left side of the body, swiped the touchscreen a couple of times to find the run menu and then pressed a button on the other side of the watch's body. The integrated GPS – something the Apple Watch sorely lacks – found a satellite lock within two minutes every time I used it. Using the app, I could customise what activities were available on the menu based on my preferences.

Information on the display was easy to read during the day and at night, as the screen has a backlight that is activated by tapping on the display or pressing a button. The text is large and I could toggle between the current time, elapsed exercise time, heart rate – captured using a similar system to the Apple Watch, using light sensors to monitor blood movement under the skin – and other information by swiping across the screen.

Exercise data is shown clearly in the app, making it easy to see how you are working during your training

session, how far you have travelled and an estimate of how many calories you have burned based on your gender and weight.

Battery life is a slight concern. Although I kept the watch charged most of the time, there were days when I popped it in my sports bag for use later in the day. There were occasions when the battery dropped by about half, presumably because it was moving in the bag. However, on long runs or up to two hours I didn't go below about 60 percent available battery, suggesting it would make it through marathon training for most runners.

Bottom line. I've tested many different trackers and sports watches over the last couple of years. Although I wouldn't wear the Surge every day, it's become an important tool for supporting my exercise habit (addiction?). Although it lacks the sophistication of specialist devices such as the Garmin ForeRunner 620, as a general exercise aid the Fitbit Surge is hard to beat. 

– ANTHONY CARUANA



FITBIT

www.fitbit.com.au

PROS Market leading activity and nutrition tracking

CONS A bit ugly

\$349



Parallels Desktop Pro 11

When Apple switched to Intel processors a decade ago, the world changed for Mac users. No longer were they limited to emulation software that made Windows applications think they were running on Intel, rather than PowerPC, processors. Instead, they could run Windows directly on their Apple-made hardware.

Apple users had the best of both worlds. They could use great hardware, stick with their Macs for most tasks and occasionally dip into the world of Windows when they had to use a specific Windows application.

At first, the trade-off was dual booting – having both Windows and OS X installed on separate disk partitions. But virtualisation software became more commercially available and we now live in a world where your Mac can run hundreds of different operating systems without the need for a reboot.

Now in its 11th version, Parallels lets you run almost any version of Windows, Linux or any other x86-compatible operating system in a sandboxed environment. This means if the virtualised machine crashes, it won't take your Mac down with it.

Incidentally, with the almost concurrent releases of Windows 10 and El Capitan, Parallels 11 isn't a minor point update. This is a significant release and an important update for existing users of Parallels

wanting to get the best of the two new operating systems.

WHICH PARALLELS IS FOR YOU?

Parallels 11 comes in three different editions: Parallels Desktop, Parallels Desktop Pro and Parallels Desktop Business.

Rather than taking a 'good, better, best' approach, the three versions are targeted at different types of users.

Parallels Desktop is the edition we suspect most people will purchase and use. Once you purchase a licence to use Parallels, you can use it forever – it's not subscription software. As long as your version of OS X supports it, you can keep using it.

The Pro version is really designed for software developers. As well as all the same features as the Desktop edition, there's some nifty integration with Microsoft's Visual Studio developer tools that makes it easy to use on a virtual machine for development and testing code. The new plug-in for Visual Studio lets developers automatically move code from development to different testing virtual machines.

The Pro addition can be purchased with an annual subscription that includes Parallels Access for remotely accessing your computer from any location.

The Business Edition rounds out the offering, adding centralised administration and management

for corporate IT teams on top of everything offered in the Pro edition.

If you're using a previous version of Parallels, there's upgrade pricing from older versions.

INSTALLATION AND SETTING UP A VM

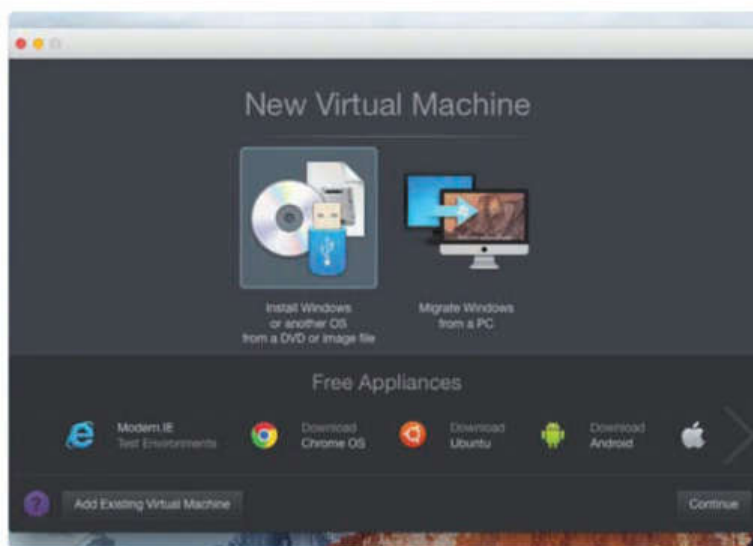
Once we installed Parallels we were taken straight to the 'New Virtual Machine' dialogue. If you have a Windows PC that you want to migrate, Parallels lets you connect to the machine and clone it to a virtual machine on your Mac. Or you can install a virtual machine from scratch using either an installation DVD or disk image.

As we were migrating from Parallels 10, we decided to import a couple of older virtual machines: one running Windows 8.1 and another running OS X Mountain Lion.

Our Windows 8.1 machine performed quite well. We're not running on the fastest Mac on the market. Our Mac mini with a Core i7 processor and 8GB of RAM is fine for most tasks, although the 1TB hard drive is far slower than Apple's Fusion Drives and SSDs.

That said, we found that the Windows machine ran quite well on our Mac.

Our Yosemite machine was another matter though. When Parallels warned us that Mac performance on the host system would be affected when



running Yosemite in a virtual machine it wasn't kidding. Our Mac slowed to crawl while the Yosemite virtual machine was running.

Adding new machines is very straightforward. If you want to create a new machine running Ubuntu, Chrome OS or Android, Parallels automates the entire process for download to installation.

If you want to run a Mac OS X virtual machine, there's also an option to use your Mac's recovery partition rather than having to download the installer again from the App Store.

If you want to install a different operating system, you can easily do that with the ability to customise everything from the allocated disk space, memory, processor cores and network access.

WINDOWS 10 SUPPORT

Although, as Mac owners, we love using OS X, it's a good idea to keep abreast of what's happening with the competition. Although Windows 8 received a lot of criticism when it was released, the tide has turned with Windows 8.1 improving many elements of the user experience and Windows 10 taking that a step further.

It's important to note Windows 10 will be the last numbered version that Windows Microsoft intends to release. From now on, any new features and updates will be applied using Windows Update.

One of the big new features that Microsoft introduced with Windows 10 is Cortana. Think of Cortana as being like Siri for Windows.

We downloaded and installed Windows 10 to a fresh virtual machine. Aside from being able to do obvious things like run Windows applications either in their own windows, full-screen or using Parallels' Coherence mode – which hides all of the Windows interface, making Windows applications look like they're running natively on the Mac – we could use Cortana to control our Mac as well as Windows.

It's a very neat trick that comes from close collaboration between the developers of Parallels and Microsoft.

That connectivity goes both ways. OS X's Quick Look feature will work within Windows virtual machines, so you can view the content of a file without having to launch an application.


MAC INTEGRATION

With Parallels running in Coherence mode you can have icons for Windows applications sitting in your Dock, so you can run Windows and Mac applications side by side, barely noticing the transition between each program.

In effect, while OS X may be your preferred operating system, it stops being a reason you can't run specific applications. You can create a hybrid

system where you run whatever applications you need without worrying about the platform they're designed for.

You can easily copy and paste between applications. For example, you can edit an image on your Mac, copy it and then paste it into a document created in a Windows-specific program. We used Parallels to copy rows from a spreadsheet on our Mac to a plan in Microsoft Project running under Windows without a hassle.

Bottom line. If you're a software developer or need to run Windows applications, Parallels is a must-have application. The integration it creates between different operating systems makes it possible to have the best of almost all software worlds. 

– ANTHONY CARUANA



PARALLELS
www.parallels.com

PROS Run any OS; tight integration between OS X and Windows 10

CONS Can impact performance

**PARALLELS DESKTOP 11 FOR MAC: \$99.95;
PARALLELS DESKTOP 11 FOR MAC PRO
EDITION: \$124.95;
PARALLELS DESKTOP 11 FOR MAC
BUSINESS EDITION: \$124.95 PER YEAR**



BrydgeAir

There are literally hundreds of iPad keyboard cases on the market. Many aren't worth considering as they're flimsy and uncomfortable to type on. The BrydgeAir is neither of those things. Until the BrydgeAir, Logitech Ultrathin was the king of iPad keyboards, but I think that reign is in danger of ending.

Most of the other keyboards I've tried connect to the iPad using magnets. When you want to use the keyboard, you pull it from the edge and sit the iPad in a channel that props it up. The BrydgeAir takes a different approach.

At the back of the BrydgeAir keyboard are two u-shaped brackets into which the iPad – in my case an iPad Air 2 – slips. There's some soft padding to prevent the iPad from being scratched, which adds friction so the iPad never feels like it's going to fall out. The hinges didn't impede my view of the iPad's Retina display.

The benefit to this approach is that it makes the iPad more like a laptop than other keyboards. Sitting on an aeroplane, at a desk or anywhere

else, I was able to flip the screen open and start typing. There's no messing about with putting the iPad in a channel. It also means that, as the hinge is quite tight, I can adjust the display to almost any viewing angle. There were many times passers-by asked what 'mini laptop' I was using. They were all surprised when I showed them it was an iPad.

The BrydgeAir is not slim. At 9mm and 520g, it adds significant size and weight to the iPad Air 2. That makes it heavier than the recently released MacBook. However, the iPad is a more flexible device, so you'll need to consider the trade-offs between the two before you make your choice.


With keyboards, the proof of the pudding comes with the eating – or the typing. The BrydgeAir is the first iPad keyboard case that has me leaving the laptop behind when I travel. If it wasn't for a couple of specific apps I don't have iPad equivalents for, I'd be hard pressed to make a case for a MacBook.

The BrydgeAir keys are smaller than regular keys. That makes for a slightly cramped feel, but I was able

to type comfortably for a couple of hours at a time. The keys were a little more 'squishy' feeling than I like, but keyboard feel is a personal thing, so I'd suggest trying a BrydgeAir before buying if possible.

Unlike most iPad keyboard cases, the BrydgeAir's keys are backlit – a handy addition for travellers who type on planes when the lights are dimmed. The backlight is not automatic – there's a button on the top row of the keyboard that toggles the backlighting on and between three different brightness levels. Adjacent to that button are controls for display brightness, play/pause and volume control, as well as the home button, Search and Safari quick launchers.

I did find there were times when the BrydgeAir became briefly unresponsive. After a few seconds, however, the Bluetooth connection was reestablished and all was well. Also, I often use the Command-Tab option for switching between apps. There were times when I switched apps, but it seemed the app that was foremost on the iPad didn't have the keyboard's focus, so it seemed the BrydgeAir wasn't working. But returning to the home screen and returning to the app sorted that out.

Now that the iPad is a serious productivity tool, with the arrival of apps such as Microsoft Office, it's possible to consider the iPad as a notebook replacement. The BrydgeAir is, potentially, the piece of hardware that complements that software and the iPad to make that a reality. 

– ANTHONY CARUANA



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